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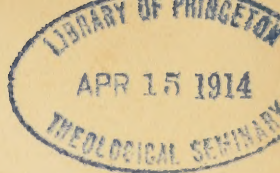








THE



# BOOK OF PSALMS:

A NEW TRANSLATION,

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

BY

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VOL. I.

FROM THE THIRD LONDON EDITION.



Andover:

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TO

My Parents,

WHO FIRST LED MY MIND TO THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE,

AND BY WHOSE CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT, WISE COUNSEL,

AND LOVING SYMPATHY,

ALL MY STUDIES HAVE BEEN CHEERED AND AIDED,

THIS WORK,

THE FIRST-FRUITS OF MY LABORS ON THE SACRED TEXT,

IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.





## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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In preparing a third edition of this work for the press, I have availed myself of the following critical aids and authorities :

1. Baer's Critical Text of the Psalter. His preface on the Metrical Accentuation of the Poetical Books deserves notice.

2. Field's admirable edition of Origen's *Hexapla*. I have corrected by reference to it many quotations which were given in my former editions on the authority of Montfaucon.

3. Moll's Commentary in Lange's *Bibelwerk*.

4. The 2d edition of Delitzsch's Psalter.

5. The 3d edition of Ewald's work on the Psalms.

6. The 2d edition of Hitzig's Commentary.

7. Dr. Kay's Psalms with Notes.

8. Professor Conant's Translation.

9. The 2d edition of Dr. Phillip's Commentary.

My special thanks are due to Mr. R. L. Bensly, of the University Library, who has been so kind as to revise the sheets of the work as it passed through the press: to his knowledge and accuracy I am greatly indebted.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE second edition of this work will not be found to differ very materially from the first. I have made a few additions, more particularly to the Critical Notes in some of the earlier Psalms; and I have corrected errors wherever I have discovered them, or where they have been pointed out to me by friends. All the references have been carefully revised. Many of the apparent mistakes in the references of the first edition were due to my having used the Hebrew Bible, without taking due care to mark where the Hebrew division of chapters or verses varied from the English. Where these differ, it will now be found, I hope, that both references are given, those to the Hebrew text being enclosed in square brackets. If, however, the double reference has still been omitted in some cases, it may be borne in mind that in all Psalms which have an inscription, the inscription is reckoned as a verse (occasionally as two verses) in the Hebrew text, whereas this is not the case in the English. Consequently the first verse in the English may be the second or even the third in the Hebrew, and so on all through. In the Critical Notes the references are always to the Hebrew text.

In revising my translation I have approached in several instances more nearly to the Authorized Version, and I have more frequently than before left the literal rendering of a clause for the note, giving the freer and more idiomatic in the text. In doing this, I have listened to the suggestions of my critics, some of whom, not agreeing in other respects, have

agreed in censuring my translation. And now as there is at last some reasonable hope that a revision of our Authorized Version will be undertaken by competent scholars, this question of translation possesses far more than a merely personal or temporary interest. Even a translator who has failed, if he has done his work honestly and conscientiously, may be a beacon, if he cannot be a guide, to those who come after him. I shall therefore be pardoned, perhaps, if I discuss more fully than I should otherwise have done, some of the points that have been raised.

The objections that have been brought against me are of this kind. One of my reviewers observes that, after having said that I had not “needlessly departed” from our Authorized Version, I have “judged it needful often enough to give an entirely new air to my translation.” Another writes: “The gain which is acquired by the greater accuracy of the version by no means compensates for the loss of harmony and rhythm and sweetness, both of sound and of association. An English reader could understand the Psalms *no better*, and he could not enjoy them *half so well*.” I have been charged with going directly against “existing standards of public taste and feeling,” in following the Hebrew order of the words, where such order is not the most natural in English. This is “to undo the work of such men as Wordsworth and Tennyson.” Again, “In the original, the paronomasia or alliteration” [to preserve which the structure of the sentence in English has been made to accommodate itself to the structure in Hebrew] “amounts only to a delicate hint, which may pass unnoticed except to an observant eye; in the translation it obtrudes itself as a prominent feature of the style.” And both critics concur in thinking that I have myself fallen into the very errors in point of taste which I have condemned in other translations.

Now I may at once say that to some extent, if not to the whole extent alleged by the reviewers, I plead guilty to the indictment. I have carried minute and punctilious accuracy

too far. I have sometimes adhered too closely, without any adequate and compensating result, to the order of the words in the Hebrew. It will be an evidence of the sincerity of my repentance on this head, that in the present edition I have in many instances corrected both the one fault and the other. But I cannot concede all that the critics demand of me.

1. In the first place, I did not say, in the preface to my first edition, that I had not “needlessly departed from our Authorized Version,” but that I had “not needlessly departed from *the sound English* of our Authorized Version”; and my meaning was evident, because I immediately gave as instances of departure the use of the verb “to seize” and of the noun “sympathy.”<sup>1</sup>

In the next place, I feel quite sure that those who lay so much stress upon “harmony and rhythm and sweetness,” are thinking more of the Prayer-book version of the Psalms, than of that of King James’s translators. The former is far more musical, more balanced, and also more paraphrastic than the latter; and from constantly hearing it read in the church services, we have become so thoroughly habituated to it, that almost any departure from its well-known cadences offends the ear. Indeed our familiarity with this version is such, that not only would most persons having occasion to quote a verse of a Psalm quote it as it stands in the Prayer-book, but they would often be very much surprised if they were told that the very sense of the Bible version was different. Of the multitude of persons who are familiar with the phrase, “The iron entered into his soul,” how many are aware that the rendering in our Bibles is, “He was laid in iron”? There can be no question as to which is the more rhythmical and the more expressive; but there can also be no question that the Authorized Version faithfully represents the Hebrew, which the other does not. It

<sup>1</sup> So it ought to have stood: the verb “to sympathize” was put by mistake for the noun “sympathy.” I have only used it once in Ps. lxix., and there to express a Hebrew noun which occurs nowhere else.



would be no difficult task to quote a number of passages from the Bible version of the Psalms which fail essentially in rhythm just because they are faithful to the original.

Take for instance the following (Ps. lviii. 7): "Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually: *when* he bendeth *his bow to shoot* his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces."

Now contrast with this the freer but inaccurate rendering of the Prayer-book version: "Let them fall away like water that runneth apace; and when they shoot their arrows, let them be rooted out."

Again, the Bible version of lix. 19 is: "God shall hear and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God."

Whereas the Prayer-book version (again very inaccurate, but much smother) is: "Yea, even God, that endureth for ever, shall hear me, and bring them down: for they will not turn nor fear God."

In the Bible, Ps. lxviii. 9 stands: Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary."

In the Prayer-book version it is: "Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance, and refreshedst it when it was weary."

Or compare the two versions in xlix. 7-9, or in cxxx. 1-4, and the same phenomenon presents itself, as it does in many other instances; the Bible is the more accurate, the Prayer-book the more rhythmical version. But if this is the case, then in estimating a new translation, the object of which is avowedly to give as exactly as possible the sense of the original, justice requires that it should be compared with the language of the Authorized Version, not with that of the Prayer-book.

3. Thirdly, I have been censured for adhering too closely to the *form* of the Hebrew, both in its idiom and in the structure of the clauses. Perhaps I have gone too far in this direction. But before a question of this kind can be decided, it is impor-

tant to lay down as clearly as possible to the mind what it is we aim at in a translation. "There are two maxims of translation," says Goethe: the one requires that the author of a foreign nation be brought to us in such a manner that we may regard him as our own; the other, on the contrary, demands of us that we transport ourselves over to him, and adopt his situation, his mode of speaking, his peculiarities. The advantages of both are sufficiently known to all instructed persons, from masterly examples." Each of these methods "is good," says Mrs. Austin, the accomplished translator of Ranke's History of the Popes, "with relation to its end — the one when matter alone is to be transferred, the other when matter and form." And she adds very truly: "The praise that a translated work might be taken for an original, is acceptable to the translator only when the original is a work in which *form* is unimportant." She instances Pope's Homer as essentially a failure, because we want to know not only *what* Homer said, but *how* he said it. "A light narrative," she continues, "a scientific exposition, or a plain statement of facts, which pretends to nothing as a work of art, cannot be too thoroughly naturalized. Whatever may be thought of the difficulties in the way of this kind of translation, they are slight compared with those attending the other kind, as anybody who carefully studies the masterpieces in this way must perceive. In the former kind the requisites are two — the meaning of the author, and a good vernacular style; in the latter, the translator has, as far as possible, to combine with these the idiomatic tone of the author — to place him before the reader with his national and individual peculiarities of thought and of speech. The more rich, new, and striking these peculiarities are, the more arduous will the task become; for there is manifestly a boundary-line, difficult if not impossible to define, beyond which the most courageously faithful translator dares not venture, under pain of becoming unreadable. This must be mainly determined by the plasticity of his language, and by the taste

of his fellow-countrymen. A German translator can effect, and may venture, more than an English ; an English than a French ; — and this, not only because his language is more full and pliant, but because Germans have less nationality, and can endure unusual forms of speech for the sake of gaining accurate insight into the characteristics of the literature of other countries.”<sup>1</sup>

It is on these grounds that Mrs. Austin defends her own “Germanisms” in her translation of Goethe into English. It is on similar grounds that I would defend “Hebraisms” in the rendering of the Psalms and the poetical portion of the Hebrew Scriptures into English. In the poetry of a people, more than in any other species of literature, *form* is of importance. Hence we find Mrs. Austin, whose skill as a translator has been universally admitted, not shunning inversions of language in her translation from Goethe, where “fidelity” and “literalness” are her object. Thus, for instance, the lines in the *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* :

“Dich verwirret, Geliebte, die tausendfältige Mischung,  
Dieses Blumengewühls über dem Garten umher ;”

are rendered by her —

“Thee perplexes, beloved, the thousandfold intermixture  
Of this flowery throng, around in the garden.”

And again,

“Blattlos aber und schnell erhebt sich der zärtere Stengel,  
Und ein Wundergebild zieht den Betrachtenden an,”

is translated —

“Leafless, however, and rapid, up darts the slenderer flower-stalk,  
And a wonderful picture attracts the observer’s eye.”

I have in the same way deliberately preferred, where the English idiom did not absolutely forbid it, to retain the order of the words in the Hebrew, because I felt that in sacrificing the *form*, I should be inflicting a loss upon the reader. How-

<sup>1</sup> Characteristics of Goethe, Vol. i. pp. xxxv — xxxvii.

ever, as I said, in revising my work I have somewhat modified my practice in this respect, and have contented myself on several occasions with putting the more literal rendering in a note.

4. Besides being guilty of too great "punctiliousness" and "inelegance," where idiom and harmony are concerned, I have sinned according to one of my reviewers,<sup>1</sup> in the introduction of the word "Jehovah" instead of "the Lord," which has for centuries been its customary equivalent. The change, he says, would be perfectly legitimate, if I were professing to make everything give way to verbal exactness. But as I allow other considerations to come in, he thinks that the perpetual recurrence of the Hebrew form of the word is in the highest degree strange and unpleasant. "As the name had fallen out of use in the Jewish church, and never became current in the Christian, our old translators did well to prefer the idea to the name; and the attempt to bring back the name seems now to force into prominence its local and national character, where everything calls for a word which has nothing local or national about it." In reply to these objections, it might be almost sufficient to observe that in retaining the Hebrew name I have only followed the example of every modern translator of eminence. But of course it is still a question for consideration, whether there are sufficient grounds for the change. I think there are very cogent grounds, which the reviewer in his dislike of novelty, or his dislike of Puritanism, has entirely overlooked. (1) In the first place, our translators in their use of the word "Lord" make no distinction between two names, "Jehovah" and "Adonai," perfectly distinct in Hebrew, and conveying different conceptions of God. (2) In the next place, it is well known that whole Psalms are characterized, just as sections of the Pentateuch are characterized, by peculiar names of God, and it is surely of some importance to retain as far as possible these characteristic features, especially when critical discussions have made them prominent, and questions of age and

<sup>1</sup> Saturday Review, July 2, 1864.



authorship have turned upon them. (3) What the reviewer regards as a disagreeable innovation, has been held by very good authorities to be a desirable emendation in our Authorized Version. "Why continue the translation of the Hebrew into English," says Coleridge, "*at second hand*, through the medium of the Septuagint? Have we not adopted the Hebrew word *Jehovah*? Is not the *Kύριος*, or Lord, of the Septuagint, a Greek substitute in countless instances for the Hebrew, *Jehovah*? Why not, then, restore the original word; and in the Old Testament religiously render *Jehovah*, by *Jehovah*; and every text in the New Testament, referring to the Old, by the Hebrew word in the text referred to?"<sup>1</sup> No one could be a better judge on such a point than one who, like Coleridge, was both poet and critic; and it is observable that he would have carried the change even farther than to confine it to the Old Testament. And the late Professor Blunt, quoting this passage, remarks that "though we may not agree with him to the full extent of his conclusion that 'had this been done, Socinianism would have been scarcely possible in England,' yet we cannot doubt that the imperfect translation of the divine name has had its effect in fostering it."<sup>2</sup> (4) If owing to merely superstitious scruples the name fell out of use in the Jewish church, and if owing to a too slavish copying of the Greek and Latin versions our own version lost the word, these are reasons of no force whatever against a return to the original use. It is no doubt a question how the word should be written when transferred to another language. "*Jehovah*" certainly is not a proper equivalent for the Hebrew form; for it is well known that the Jews, having lost the true pronunciation of the name, transferred to it the vowels of the other name "*Adonai*," which in reading they have for centuries substituted for it. Some of the Germans write "*Jahveh*," others "*Jahaveh*"; and Hupfeld, despairing of any certainty

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's Remains, iv. p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Blunt, Duties of the Parish Priest, Lect. ii. p. 41.

as to the vowels, retains merely the consonants and writes "Jhvh." Probably the most correct equivalent in English would be "Yahveh" or "Yahaveh," but this would look pedantic, and would doubtless shock sensitive eyes and ears far more than the comparatively familiar form, Jehovah. Nor must it be forgotten that this Hebrew form is sometimes, though rarely, admitted by our translators, as is also the still less euphonious form, Jah. (5) Lastly, I cannot feel that it is any objection that the use of the Hebrew name "forces into prominence its local and national character." On the contrary, if we are to read the Old Testament with anything like discerning appreciation, if we are not to confound the New Testament with the Old, as the majority of ancient commentators and a large number of modern commentators do, thus effacing altogether, as far as in them lies, the progressive character of Revelation, we shall be anxious to retain all that is distinctive and characteristic in the earlier Scriptures, that we may give to each portion its proper value. We shall not wish to efface a single character by which God helps us the better to trace his footsteps, but shall thankfully remember that he who "in many portions and in many manners spake to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us in a Son."

Having said so much on this subject of translation, I will venture to add a few words on the proposed revision of our Authorized Version.

It appears to me a matter of real congratulation to the church that such a revision has at length been seriously entertained by Convocation. I do not share the feelings of those who look upon any attempt to correct manifest errors with dislike and apprehension. Indeed the objectors have in this instance suffered their fears very grossly to exaggerate the evil against which they protest. Nothing, surely, can be more moderate, or more cautiously framed, than the language of the resolution adopted by the Southern Province in Convocation. They only advise that those passages in the Authorized Version

should be amended "where plain and clear errors . . . shall on due investigation be found to exist." Yet it has been assumed, by nearly every writer and speaker who is opposed to revision, that revision is equivalent to reconstruction. It has been assumed that a commission would not leave of the existing structure one stone upon another—would scarcely even make use of the stones of the old building for the construction of the new. The whole strength of the objector's case rests on this assumption. Yet, even setting aside the distinct avowal of the resolution to the contrary, scholars and men of taste and judgment are not likely to agree together to be guilty of any such ruthless demolition. The probability is that among those to whom the task of revision would be entrusted, there would be found many men whose veneration for our Authorized Version is quite as great, and quite as intelligent, as that of those who object to any alteration. Men of this kind would not be for rash and hasty corrections, or for trivial emendations. They would not suffer wanton injury to be done. They would religiously preserve the fine old diction, the mother idiom, the grace and the strength of the existing version. These are too precious a heritage, they would feel, to be lightly sacrificed. Keeping close to the terms of the resolution, they would only give a true rendering to passages which have *undoubtedly* been wrongly translated.

With the overthrow of this assumption, all the other arguments against revision lose their force. It has been said, for instance, that the specimens of new translations which have lately appeared are not such as to hold out any prospect of improvement in the new version. They may be more literal, but they are less idiomatic than the authorized translation. But it is one thing for an individual to put forth a translation which he believes gives the nearest and most literal rendering of a book; it is another thing to revise an existing translation. In the former case, the utmost liberty may be claimed; in the latter, the work has its own obvious limitations. The difference

is the difference between the architect who builds a new church as a rival to the old, or with the view of securing some particular advantages, acoustic properties for instance, which the old did not possess, and the architect who restores an ancient and glorious cathedral, removing only defects, and scrupulously preserving all its characteristic features.

So, again, with regard to the objection that the new version would not gain universal acceptance, as that of 1611 has done ; this surely depends upon the manner of its execution. No doubt even those comparatively few and moderate corrections which alone are designed would at first be regarded with some suspicion, especially because, as the Bishop of St. David's pointed out, clergymen and dissenting ministers would thereby be robbed of some of their favorite texts. No doubt there would be some sharp criticism of the work. But if learned men of all parties, nonconformists as well as churchmen, are associated in the revision, and if the revision is wisely and carefully made within the assigned limits, there seems no very obvious reason why the new book should not find acceptance gradually, and eventually supersede the old. If it did not, it would fall by its own demerits, and no amount of " authority " would ensure its success.

The limitation of the revision to " plain and clear errors," does away also with the objection, of which so much has been made, that the faith of the ignorant would be unsettled if they were led to suppose that what they had been accustomed to receive as the word of God, was not the word of God. This is precisely the kind of argument which would have stopped the Reformation. And the objectors seem to forget that the mischief they apprehend is already done, when ministers of religion give, as they often do, corrections of the existing version in their pulpits, and when designing men lay hold of manifest mistranslation as an instrument whereby to shake the faith of the multitude in the Bible.

One more objection only I shall notice. It has been argued



that no essential doctrine would be affected by the change, and that therefore the change is not worth the risk which it entails. Those who rely most on this argument are the very last who ought to make it. For though it may be quite true that no doctrine of importance would be touched, yet holding, as they do, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” they ought to hold that its exact sense is everywhere of importance. But I am not prepared to admit the allegation in all its breadth. There are passages in our Bible where great truths are at least grievously obscured by a wrong translation. Take, for instance, that very striking prophecy<sup>1</sup> in the latter part of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah. Perhaps there is no more remarkable prophecy in the Bible; yet it is worse than obscure as it stands in our Authorized Version. The sense given in the Authorized Version is even the exact opposite of the true sense. The prophecy ceases to be a prophecy at all. The prophet had been speaking of a thick darkness which should settle upon the land. Men in their perplexity, instead of seeking counsel of God and his word (viii. 19, 20), were seeking to necromancers and to “wizards that *chirp*” (E. V. *peep*, i.e. pipe like birds, the Latin *pipiare*), and that mutter. The inevitable result was a yet more terrible hopelessness.

“And they shall pass along hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and they shall curse their king and their God; and they shall look upward, and they shall look to the earth, and behold trouble and anguish, and distressful gloom. But the darkness is driven away. For there shall no more be gloom where there was vexation. As in the former time he lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so in the latter time he hath made her glorious by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the

<sup>1</sup> This is the passage to which the Bishop of Llandaff referred in his speech in Convocation.

shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden and the staff (laid upon) his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every greave of the greaved warrior in the battle-tumult, and the garment<sup>1</sup> rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire. For a child is born unto us, a Son is given unto us; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity,<sup>2</sup> Prince of Peace."

I have purposely abstained from any needless departure here from the Authorized Version. I have only corrected "plain and clear errors."

The alterations which I have made in the above passage are such as I believe, with one exception (that at the end of viii. 22, "but the darkness is driven away"), would be accepted by all Hebrew scholars. And I would ask any one who recollects that this important passage is read every Christmas-day in the ears of the people, and who has felt how impossible it is to extract any intelligible sense from it, whether the mere correction of acknowledged errors would not be an immense boon, whether it would not make at least one great prophecy concerning Christ shine with tenfold brightness? Are such corrections valueless? Would any injury or any loss follow from them? If not, is it not at least worth while to make the trial, to see whether we can improve without injuring our Authorized Version?

Since the first edition of this volume was published, several works have appeared in England bearing more or less directly on the interpretation of the Psalms. Bishop Wordsworth's Commentary is well known. It keeps to the beaten track of ancient exposition. "The Psalms by Four Friends" is a fresh and suggestive contribution to the literature of the subject.

<sup>1</sup> Properly, the soldier's cloak.

<sup>2</sup> Or perhaps, "Father of the age to come," or "Author of a new dispensation.

But it is impossible not to feel some regret that men who have done their work in other respects so well should have followed so arbitrary an authority as Ewald in his chronological arrangement. The Rev. Charles Taylor in his book, *The Gospel in the Law*, has treated with learning and ability many of the questions connected with the interpretation of the Messianic Psalms and the Psalms of Imprecation. Still more recently, Dr. Binnie of Stirling has published a work on the Psalms, in which he discusses their history and poetical structure, their theology, and their use in the church. In his chapters on the theology of the Psalms, he maintains the most commonly received views respecting the Messiah, a future life, the imprecations, etc., but he handles these subjects with learning and moderation. I must not omit to add to these works Professor Plumptre's volume of "*Biblical Studies*," in which he has republished a very interesting paper on "*the Psalms of the Sons of Korah*."

I have had so little leisure for the revision of my own volume that I have not been able to make all the use of these different works which I could have desired. But I am indebted to them as well as to many correspondents, known and unknown, for valuable suggestions, which perhaps at some future time I may be able to turn to better account.

ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE, LAMPETER,  
March 14, 1870.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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THIS work is designed to be a contribution to the study of the Old Testament. In preparing it for the press, I have kept before me the wants of two classes of readers ; those who have, and those who have not, an acquaintance with the original text ; and I am led to hope that thus the Commentary will be more widely useful, than if it had been merely popular on the one hand, or exclusively critical on the other.

It will be seen, that I have endeavored to accomplish three things.

I. In the first place, I have given a new translation of the Psalms, which it has been my object to make as faithful and as accurate as possible, at the same time that I have sought to avoid rather than to imitate that punctiliousness of rendering which, especially among our commentators on the New Testament, has been so much in fashion of late. In many instances, this too scrupulous accuracy is so far from helping to the better understanding of an author, that it has exactly the reverse effect. The idiom of the English language is sacrificed to the idiom of the Greek ; and nothing whatever is gained by the sacrifice. What is supposed to be extreme accuracy is, in fact, nothing but extreme inelegance. The consequence is, that the hybrid English, which is designed to represent the Greek so exactly, stands bald and ragged, in the garb of a beggar as well as a foreigner, and fails to convey any intelligible idea at all, unless it be to a reader who already is acquainted with the



Greek. The Old Testament has not as yet been subjected, to the same extent, to this starving, denaturalizing process, though it has not altogether escaped. Indeed, it would be no difficult matter to cite passages from recent English translations, rendered evidently with the greatest care and apparent fidelity to the original, which are wanting in all the essentials of a good translation, having neither rhythm nor force nor elegance. I am not so presumptuous as to assert that where others have failed, I have succeeded. I can only say I have striven to the utmost to produce a faithful, but not a servile translation. Perhaps it is hardly necessary to add, that a new translation implies no disparagement to our Authorized Version. To the many excellences of that version, no one can be more alive than I am; the more it is studied the more these will be appreciated; the more its noble simplicity, its unapproachable grandeur, its rhythmic force of expression will be felt. But it is obvious that, since the time when it was made, our knowledge of the grammar of the Hebrew language, of the structure of Hebrew poetry, and of many other subjects tending to the elucidation of the sacred text, has been largely increased. A modern interpreter is bound to avail himself of these new stores of knowledge, and may reasonably hope to produce, at least in some passages, a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew than that which our translators have adopted. But, as a rule, I have not needlessly departed from the sound English of our Authorized Version. Two or three words not used by our translators, such as the verb "to seize," and the noun "sympathy," I have ventured to employ, where they seemed to me, in the particular passage, most exactly to convey the meaning of the original words. I have also adhered more closely than is usual in the English version, to the order of the words in the Hebrew, because in many instances, as might be expected in a language so antithetical in its structure, the special force of certain words is thus maintained, or some delicate shade of meaning more clearly brought out, which would otherwise be

lost. How far the attempt thus made has been successful, it is for others to judge.

II. In the next place, I have endeavored, by means of introductions to the several Psalms, and by explanatory notes, to convey to the English reader a true idea of the scope and meaning of each. Here I have availed myself of the best commentaries, ancient and modern. I have used them freely, but have laid it down as a rule to express my obligations, and to give the name of the writer from whom I have borrowed. If in some few instances I may have neglected to observe this rule, it has not been done intentionally. From the Fathers I have gleaned but little; their style of exposition being such as to lead them to disregard the literal sense, and to seek for mystical and allegorical interpretations. For the first true exposition of Scripture, of the Old Testament more especially, we must come to the time of the Reformation. Here, Luther and Calvin hold the foremost place, each having his peculiar excellence. Luther, in his own grand, fearless way, always goes straight to the heart of the matter. He is always on the lookout for some great principle, some food for the spiritual life, some truth which can be turned to practical account. He is pre-eminently what in modern phrase would be called *subjective*, as a commentator. Every word of Scripture seems to him instinct with life and meaning for himself and his own immediate circumstances. But on that very account he not unfrequently misses the proper and original force of a passage, because he is so intent on a personal application; not to mention that he cannot always shake himself free of the allegorical cobwebs of patristic interpretation. They still cling to the mane of the lion, who in his strength has trodden down the thicket.

Calvin, on the other hand, may justly be styled the great master of exegesis. He is always careful to ascertain as exactly as possible the *whole* meaning and scope of the writer on whom he comments. In this respect his critical sagacity

is marvellous, and quite unrivalled. He keeps close, moreover, to the sure ground of historical interpretation, and, even in the Messianic Psalms, always sees a first reference to the actual circumstances of the writer. Indeed, the view which he constantly takes of such Psalms would undoubtedly expose him to the charge of Rationalism, were he now alive. In many parts of the forty-fifth Psalm he boldly denies any Messianic meaning at all. In expounding the seventy-second, he warns us against a sophistical application of words to Christ, which do not properly belong to him. In writing on the fortieth Psalm, he ventures to suggest, that the quotation from it in the Epistle to the Hebrews is not made in accordance with the genuine sense of the passage as it stands in the Psalm. I quote these things simply to show what has been said by a man who, though of course a damnable heretic in the eyes of the Church of Rome, is by a considerable section of our own church regarded as a high and weighty authority. Even Luther is not guilty of those forced and unreal expositions which, it is to be feared, are now becoming common. In writing on the twentieth Psalm he says: "This Psalm almost all expound of Christ. But such an exposition appears to me to be too far-fetched to be called literal." Calvin's method of interpretation, in this and similar instances, will be abundantly evident to any one who will read the following Commentary, where I have constantly and largely quoted from him. In some cases, as in the seventeenth Psalm, where he denies all reference to a future life, I have felt constrained to differ from him; in others, as in the Imprecatory Psalms, I have thought that he hardly carries out his own principles consistently. But of the general soundness of his principles of exegesis, where he is not under the influence of doctrinal prejudices — as, indeed, he rarely is in his Commentary on the Psalms — I am thoroughly convinced. He is the prince of commentators. He stands foremost among those who, with that true courage which fears God rather than man, have dared to leave the

narrow grooves and worn ruts of a conventional theology and to seek truth only for itself. It is well to study the writings of this great man, if only that we may learn how possible it is to combine soundness in the faith with a method of interpretation varying even in important particulars from that commonly received. Nothing, I believe, is so likely to beget in us a spirit of enlightened liberality, of Christian forbearance, of large-hearted moderation, as the careful study of the history of doctrine and the history of interpretation. We shall then learn how widely good men have differed in all ages, how much of what we are apt to think essential truth is not essential, and, without holding loosely what we ourselves believe to be true, we shall not be hasty to condemn those who differ from us.

Amongst more modern commentators, I am indebted chiefly to the Germans. The valuable works of De Wette, Tholuck, Stier, Delitzsch, Ewald, Hupfeld, and Bunsen I have always consulted with advantage.<sup>1</sup> Ewald is very often arbitrary, no doubt, and with many of his conclusions I am quite unable to agree; but his intuitive faculty is admirable, and much may be learnt from him, even where I, with others, may deem him most at fault. He holds deservedly a high position, but he would hold a higher were he less severe and unjust in his condemnation of those who differ from him. Hupfeld's Commentary is the most exhaustive that has yet appeared, and in point of grammatical analysis by far the most masterly. Indeed, I know of none, on any part of the Old Testament, at all to be compared to it in these respects. Delitzsch represents a different school both of grammatical interpretation and of theology. He has a very extensive acquaintance with Talmudical and Rabbinical lore, and leans to the Jewish expositors.

<sup>1</sup> No candid reader of this volume will, I hope, be left in doubt how far I agree, or disagree, with writers who differ so widely from one another as some of those just named. But to lay down exactly here the theological position of each of these writers, would be a difficult and delicate task, and one to which I do not feel I am called.



In depth and spiritual insight, as well as in the full recognition of the Messianic element in the Psalms, he is far before either of the others. The laborious dulness of Hengstenberg renders it a tedious task to read his Commentary; and the English translation makes matters ten times worse.<sup>1</sup> The notes in Bunsen's Bibelwerk are, as a rule, excellent; in many instances where I have ventured to dissent from Hupfeld, I have had the pleasure of finding myself supported by Bunsen in my rendering of a passage. It is a matter of deep regret that the illustrious author did not live to witness the completion of a work in which his learning and his piety both shine so brightly, and which he had so greatly at heart.<sup>2</sup>

English expositors who have preceded me on the same path, have not, I hope, been overlooked. Bishop Horne's Commentary, the notes of Hammond and Horsley, the work of the Rev. G. Phillips (now president of Queen's College, Cambridge), and Mr. Thrupp's Introduction and other works more or less directly bearing on the interpretation of the Psalms, have been consulted.<sup>3</sup> Dean Alford, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, has everywhere recognized and maintained, as it seems to me, the soundest principles of interpretation with reference to the Psalms, more especially the Messianic

<sup>1</sup> I give two specimens taken at random. "By the lowly is to be understood such a person, as at the time feels his lowliness; as also under the proud, he who is such in his own eyes, are to be thought of." — Vol. iii. p. 489. "The hero David, the *deforcer* of the lion, and the conqueror of Goliath." — Ibid. xix.

<sup>2</sup> In many things I differ materially from Bunsen, nor do I appear as the advocate of all his theological views; but of this I am sure, that in England he has been greatly misunderstood and misrepresented; and I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration of one who, amidst the anxious demands of public duties, could find time for the prosecution of studies as manifold and various as they were important, and who to the splendor of vast attainments, and the dignity of a high position, added the better glory of a Christian life.

<sup>3</sup> The notes which accompany the Tract Society's Paragraph Bible deserve high commendation. They are brief, and to the point, and, without any affectation of learning, often give the correct sense of difficult passages. An unpretending, but useful little volume, has also been published by Mr. Ernest Hawkins, containing annotations on the Prayer-book version.

Psalms, and it is only to be regretted that this able expositor has not devoted some of that time and those energies to the elucidation of the Old Testament which, in their devotion to the New, have already borne noble fruit. And here I cannot refrain from expressing my wish that our great English scholars had not been so exclusively occupied with the criticism and interpretation of the New Testament, to the comparative neglect of the Old.<sup>1</sup> The contrast between ourselves and the leading German commentators is, in this respect, very remarkable. In Germany, those who have been most successful in their elucidation of the Greek text of the New Testament, have, in most cases, come to it well-furnished and equipped with Hebrew lore. De Wette, Bleek, Tholuck, Umbreit, Stier, Delitzsch, and others, to whom we owe some of the most valuable commentaries on the Gospels and Epistles, are men who have interpreted, with no less ability and success, various portions of the Old Testament; and it is impossible not to feel how materially their familiarity with the latter has assisted them in their exposition of the former. To Bleek and Delitzsch we are indebted for the two most thorough and exhaustive commentaries which have yet been written on the Epistle to the Hebrews. A glance at Dean Alford's volume will show, what it is no disparagement to him to remark, how largely he has borrowed from their accumulated treasures. Of that

<sup>1</sup> This is a reproach which is not likely to attach to us much longer. Dr. Pusey has already led the way in his elaborate Commentary on the Minor Prophets, a work full of erudition. We are also promised a Commentary on the whole Bible, under the editorship of the Rev. F. C. Cook, which is intended to convey to English readers the results of the most recent investigations into the criticism and interpretation of the sacred text. There is no lack of scholarship in England fully equal to such a task. Such accomplished scholars as the Deans of St. Paul's and Westminster, Mr. Grove, Mr. Plumptre, and many of the contributors to Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, have already cast a flood of light on the history, geography, antiquities, etc., of the Old Testament. The Bishop of Ely, in his Lectures on the Pentateuch and the Elohistic Psalms, and Mr. Pritchard, in his reply to Bishop Colenso, have given further and abundant proof that the criticism of the Old Testament is no unknown field to our English divines.

Epistle, perhaps more than any other portion of the New Testament, it may be safely said that it cannot be understood without a profound and accurate knowledge of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophets. But the same remark holds good of the other books. As both Testaments were given by inspiration of the same Spirit, as both speak one truth, though in divers manners and under different aspects, it is obvious that the more complete our understanding of the one, the more complete also will be our understanding of the other.

III. Lastly, I have appended a series of notes, in which I have discussed the criticism of the text, the various readings, the grammatical difficulties, and other matters of interest rather to the scholar than to the general reader. These have been placed separately, for the most part, at the end of each Psalm, in order not to embarrass those who know nothing of Hebrew.

Here, as indeed in the notes generally, it will be seen that I have been fuller in the later Psalms than in the earlier. The reason for this is, that I had at one time hoped to finish the whole work in the compass of one volume, a design which I was afterwards compelled to abandon. But I trust that in no instance has any essential point been overlooked. For the ordinary grammatical rules and constructions, the lexicon and grammar must be consulted; I have only handled those more exceptional cases which present some real difficulty, verbal, textual, or grammatical.

The critical aids of which I have availed myself are the following:

1. The well-known collections of Kennicott and De Rossi, whence the various readings of the principal mss. have been gathered. These various readings are, unhappily, of comparatively little value in ascertaining the true text of the Hebrew Bible, as none of the mss. are of any high antiquity. A useful digest will be found in Dr. Davidson's Revision of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

2. The Versions. The text of the LXX which I have followed is that of Tischendorf's last edition. For the other Greek versions, Montfaucon's edition of Origen's Hexapla has been used.

The Chaldee, Arabic, and Syriac versions have been consulted in Walton's Polyglot, and the last also in Dathe's edition of the Syriac Psalter. For Jerome's version I have used Migne's edition, and for the Vulgate the small Paris edition of 1851. I have also made use of the Anglo-Saxon version, and the ancient Latin version which accompanies it, which were edited by Thorpe.

Besides these I have constantly had before me the versions of Luther, Diodati, Mendelssohn, Zunz, and others.

To these aids I must add Fürst's Concordance, and the Thesaurus of Gesenius, both of them wonderful monuments of learning and industry. The grammars which I have used are those of Gesenius, the English edition by Davidson, based on the sixteenth German edition (Bagster, 1852); and Ewald's *Lehrbuch*, 6<sup>te</sup> Auflage, 1855. The commentaries already referred to, especially those of Hupfeld and Delitzsch, have assisted me materially here, as well as Reinke's on the Messianic Psalms. I have also found Maurer and De Wette of service, more so, indeed, critically than exegetically: Hitzig and Olshausen I only know at second-hand.

To three friends I am under great personal obligations: to the Rev. J. G. Mould, formerly Fellow and Tutor of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and the Rev. C. Pritchard, formerly Fellow of St. John's College [now Savilian Professor of Astronomy in the University of Oxford], for many valuable suggestions; and to Mr. W. Aldis Wright, the learned librarian of Trinity College, who has carefully revised a great part of the work. I am only sorry that the earlier sheets had been printed before he saw them, and contain therefore many more inaccuracies, I fear, than the later.

Thus I have explained what I have done, or rather what I



have attempted to do. Many faults there must be ; but, to quote the words of Calvin, “ Even if I have not succeeded to the full extent of my endeavors, still the attempt itself merits some indulgence ; and all I ask is, that each, according to the advantage he shall himself derive therefrom, will be an impartial and candid judge of my labors.”

Among the students of Hebrew in England it is a pleasure to me to think that I may count many of my former and present pupils, many who have heard from me in the lecture-room of King’s College, London, or of St. David’s College Lampeter, the explanations and the criticisms which I have here placed in a more permanent form. I cannot help indulging the hope that they will welcome the book as coming from one who can never cease to feel the liveliest interest in all that concerns them. It would be no common gratification to me to know that it had served in some instances, perhaps, to continue a work which I had begun, or had even revived a study which the pressure of a busy life had compelled some of them to lay aside.

And now I commit to the Great Head of the church this attempt to interpret some portion of his holy word, humbly beseeching him to grant that it may bring forth fruit to his glory and the edification of his church.

Truth has been my one object, I can truly say ; mindful, I hope, that truth can only be attained through “ the heavenly illumination of the Holy Ghost.” Yet I would not forget what Luther has so beautifully said, that none can hope to understand for himself or teach to others the full meaning of every part of the Psalms. It is enough for us if we understand it in part. “ Many things doth the Spirit reserve to himself that he may ever keep us as his scholars, many things he doth but show to allure us, many more he teacheth to affect us ; and, as Augustine hath admirably said, no one has ever so spoken as to be understood by every one in every particular, much more doth the Holy Ghost himself alone possess the

full understanding of all his own words. Wherefore I must honestly confess, that I know not whether I possess the full and proper (*legitimam*) understanding of the Psalms or not, though I doubt not that that which I give is in itself true. For all that St. Augustine, Jerome, Athanasius, Hilary, Cassiodorus, and others, have written on the Psalter is very true, though sometimes as far as possible from the literal meaning . . . . One fails in one thing, another in another . . . . others will see what I do not. What then follows, but that we should help one another, and make allowance for those who err, as knowing that we either have erred, or shall err, ourselves. . . . I know that he must be a man of most boundless hardihood who would venture to give it out that he understands a single book of Scripture in all its parts; nay, who would venture to assume that one Psalm has ever been perfectly understood by any one. Our life is a beginning and a setting out, not a finishing; he is best who shall have approached nearest to the mind of the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

ST. DAVID'S COLLEGE, LAMPETER,

March 1, 1864.

<sup>1</sup> Luther, Praef. in Operationes in Psalmos.

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# INTRODUCTION.

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## CHAPTER I.

### DAVID AND THE LYRIC POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

THE Poetry of the Hebrews is mainly of two kinds, lyrical and didactic. They have no epic, and no drama. Dramatic elements are to be found in many of their odes, and the Book of Job and the Song of Songs have sometimes been called divine dramas; but dramatic poetry, in the proper sense of that term, was altogether unknown to the Israelites. The remains of their lyric poetry which have been preserved — with one marked exception, the Lament of David over Saul and Jonathan — are almost entirely of a religious character, and were designed chiefly to be set to music, and to be sung in the public services of the sanctuary. The earliest specimen of purely lyrical poetry which we possess is the Song of Moses on the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. It is the worthy expression of a nation's joy at being delivered, by the outstretched arm of Jehovah, from the hand of their oppressors. It is the grandest ode to liberty which was ever sung. And it is this, because its homage is rendered, not to some ideal spirit of liberty, deified by a people in the moment of that passionate and frantic joy which follows the successful assertion of their independence, but because it is a thanksgiving to him who is the one only Giver of victory and of freedom. Both in form and spirit it possesses the same characteristics which stamp all the later Hebrew poetry. Although without any regular strophical division, it has the chorus, "Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously," etc.; it was sung evidently in antiphonal measure, chorus answering to chorus and voice to voice; it was sung accompanied by dancing, and to the music of the maidens playing upon the timbrels. Such is its form. In its spirit, it is like all the national songs of the people — a hymn sung to the glory of Jehovah. No word celebrates the prowess of the armies of Israel or of their leaders: "Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is become

glorious in power; thy right hand, O Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Thus it commemorates that wonderful victory, and thus it became the pattern after which all later odes of victory were written. The people from whom such poetry could spring, at so early a period of their history, could not have been the rude, ignorant horde which some writers delight to represent them; they must have made large use of Egyptian culture, and, in these respects, in poetry and music, must have far surpassed their Egyptian masters.

*Early Lyric Fragments.* — Some fragments of poetry belong to the narrative of the wanderings in the wilderness. One of these (Num. xxi. 14, 15), too obscure in its allusions to be quite intelligible now, is quoted from a book called "The Book of the Wars of Jehovah," which was probably a collection of ballads and songs composed on different occasions by the watch-fires of the camp, and, for the most part, in commemoration of the victories of the Israelites over their enemies. Another is the little carol first sung at the digging of the well in the plains of Moab, and afterwards, we may presume, commonly used by those who came to draw water. Bright, fresh, and sparkling it is, as the waters of the well itself. The maidens of Israel, we may believe, chanted it one to another, line by line, as they toiled at the bucket, and thus beguiled their labor. "Spring up, O well?" was the burden or refrain of the song, which would pass from one mouth to another, at each fresh coil of the rope, till the full bucket reached the well's mouth.<sup>1</sup>

The blessings of the high priest (Num. vi. 24-26), and the chants which were the signal for the ark to set forward when the people journeyed, and for it to rest when they were about to encamp, are also cast in the form of poetry. But these specimens, interesting as they are in themselves and from the circumstances which gave birth to them, are brief and fugitive. A far grander relic of that time has survived. The ninetieth Psalm is "The Prayer of Moses the Man of God," written evidently towards the close of the forty years' wandering in the desert. It is touched with the profound melancholy of one who had seen his dearest hopes disappointed, who had endured trials of no common kind, who had buried his kindred in the desert, who had beheld the people whom he led out of Egypt smitten down by the heavy wrath of God, who came to the borders of the Promised Land, looked upon it, but was not suffered to enter therein. It is the lofty expression of a faith purified by adversity, of a faith which, having seen every human

<sup>1</sup> See the Article on the Book of Numbers, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. ii. p. 583; Am. ed. Vol. iii. p. 2194.

hope destroyed, clings with the firmer grasp to him of whom it can say, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." This Psalm is like the pillar of fire and of a cloud which led the march of Israel — it is both dark and bright. It is darkness as it looks, in sorrowful retrospect, upon man ; it is light as it is turned, in hope and confidence, to God.

*Poetry in the Time of the Judges.* — During the stormy period which followed the first occupation of Canaan, poetry was probably but little cultivated. Yet it would be a mistake, as Dean Milman has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> to conclude that the whole period from Joshua to Samuel was a period of "alternate slavery and bloody struggles for independence," or that, during the greater part of it, the Israelites were subject to foreign oppression. Such seems by no means to have been the case. The wars of the time were wars, not of the whole people, but of the several tribes with their immediate neighbors. The conflicts were confined to a very limited area ; and out of a period of about four hundred and sixty years, more than three hundred were, it may be inferred from the silence of the narrative, years of peace and prosperity. The struggles for independence, however, which did take place, were such as roused the national spirit in an extraordinary degree ; it was the age of heroes ; and the victory, in one instance at least, was commemorated in a poem worthy of the occasion. Of the Song of Deborah Dean Milman says : "The solemn religious commencement ; the picturesque description of the state of the country ; the mustering of the troops from all quarters ; the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof ; the life, fire, and energy of the battle ; the bitter pathos of the close, — lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production."

*David.* — But the great era of lyric poetry begins with David. Born with the genius of a poet, and skilled in music, he had already practised his art whilst he kept his father's sheep on the hills of Bethlehem. That he was no mean proficient on the harp is evident from his having been sent for to charm away the evil spirit from Saul, in those fits of gloomy despondency and temporary derangement to which that unhappy king was subject. It is probable that he had added careful study to his natural gifts, for we find him closely associated with Samuel and his schools of prophets — men who, like himself, were both poets and musicians. The art which he had thus acquired, and thus carefully

<sup>1</sup> History of the Jews, Vol. i. p. 219 (2d. ed.). See also Mr. Drew's Scripture Studies, p. 143.

studied, was his solace through life. His harp was the companion of his flight from Saul and of his flight from Absalom. It was heard in the caves of Engedi, on the broad uplands of Mahanaim, on the throne of Israel. We have songs of his which date from all periods of his life—from the days of his shepherd youth to his old age, and within a short time of his death. Both his life and his character are reflected in his poetry. That life, so full of singular vicissitudes, might of itself have formed the subject of an epic, and in any other nation but that of the Hebrews would certainly have been made the groundwork of a poem. It is a life teeming with romantic incidents and those sudden turns of fortune which poets love to describe. The latter portion of his history, that which begins with his great crimes, and which traces, step by step, their fearful but inevitable chastisement, is itself a tragedy—a tragedy, in terror and pathos, equal to any which the great poets of the Grecian drama have left us, and, in point of human interest as well as divine instruction, incomparably beyond them.

*Life of David in his Psalms.*—But the poets of Israel did not make their national heroes, however great, the subjects of their verse, or, if they did, no works of this kind have come down to us. Designed to be the great teachers of a pure faith to men, chosen of God to speak his words, to utter the yearnings and the hopes of men's hearts towards him, they were not suffered to forget this their higher vocation, or, when they did, their words perished. Even the fame of Solomon could not secure for his thousand and five songs, which were probably merely of a secular kind, the meed of immortality. Hence it is that we have no Hebrew poems on the life of David; and hence also it is that the perils and adventures through which he passed are not described in David's songs as they would have been by more modern poets. We are often at a loss to know to what particular parts of his history, to what turns and circumstances of his fortunes, this or that Psalm is to be referred. Still it is impossible to read them and not to see that they are colored by the reminiscences of his life. A Psalm of this kind, for instance, is the twenty-third.<sup>1</sup> He who speaks there so beautifully of the care of God, under the figure of a shepherd, had known himself what it was to tend his sheep—"to make them lie down in green pastures," to lead them to the side of the brook which had not been dried up by the summer's sun. Another image in that Psalm we can hardly be wrong in conjecturing is borrowed from personal experience. It was scarcely a figure for David to speak of God as spreading a table

<sup>1</sup> Even Ewald almost inclines to allow that this may have been a Psalm of David's, though his final verdict is in favor of a later, though not much later, poet.



for him "in the presence of his enemies." It was "in the presence of his enemies" that Barzillai and others brought their plentiful provision of "wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat, when they were hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness." (2 Sam. xvii. 28, 29.)

Or take, again, the eighteenth Psalm, which we know from the express testimony of the history, as well as from its inscription, to be David's, and which is on all hands admitted to be his. How thickly sown it is with metaphors, which, in his mouth, have a peculiar force and beauty. Such are the names by which he addresses God. Thrice he speaks of God as a rock: "Jehovah is my rock, my fortress, my buckler, the horn of my salvation, my high tower." And again, "Who is a rock, save our God?" And yet again, "Jehovah liveth, and blessed be my rock."<sup>1</sup> How suitable are such epithets as coming from one who when hunted by Saul had so often taken refuge among the rocks and fastnesses, the almost inaccessible crags and cliffs, of Palestine. As he had escaped by swiftness of foot, so he tells how God had made his feet like the feet of the hinds or gazelles, which he had so often seen bounding from crag to crag before his eyes, and had set him "upon high places" beyond reach of the hunter's arrow. To the same class of metaphors belong also others in the same Psalm: "Thy right hand hath holden me up," "Thou hast made room for my steps under me, that my ankles have not slipped;" whilst the martial character of the whole is thoroughly in keeping with the entire tenor of David's life, who first, as captain of a band of outlaws, lived by his sword, and who afterwards, when he became king, was engaged in perpetual struggles either with foreign or domestic enemies.

It would be easy to multiply observations of this kind. One other feature of his poetry, as bearing upon our present subject, must not be overlooked. It is full of allusions to sufferings, to distresses, to persecutions; it abounds with complaints of the faithlessness of friends, of the malice of enemies, of snares laid for his life; it tells of constant perils and wonderful deliverances. Such expressions might naturally have come from David's lips again and again. But they are general, not special. Saul is not mentioned, nor Doeg, nor Ahithophel, nor Shimei. Very rarely is there an allusion of which we can say with certainty that it connects itself with one particular event rather than

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xviii. 1, 2. See also verses 30, 31, 46. Compare lxii. 2, 6, 7, where, in like manner, God is thrice called a rock.

with another. We have enough to convince us that the words are David's words, but not enough to tell us under what pressure of calamity, or by what joy of deliverance, they were called forth. Shepherd, courtier, outlaw, king, poet, musician, warrior, saint — he was all these; he is all these in his Psalms, yet we can lay our finger but upon one or two that seem to exhibit him in one of these characters rather than in another. The inference is obvious: the Psalms were designed not to be the record of a particular life, but to be the consolation and the stay of all those who, with outward circumstances widely different, might find in them, whether in sorrow or in joy, the best expression of feelings which they longed to utter.

*Inner Life of David.* — But if the poems of David throw comparatively little light on the external circumstances under which they were written, they throw much upon his inner life. And here their value cannot be over-estimated. The notices of the history, indeed, leave us in no doubt as to the reality of his faith, the depth and sincerity of his piety. But the Psalms carry us further. By the help of these we see him, as we see but few men, his heart laid open in communion with God. We see the true man, in the deep humiliation of his repentance, in the invincible strength of his faith, in that cleaving to God in which he surpassed all others. How imperfect, if we had nothing but the narrative in the Books of Samuel to guide us, would be our knowledge of that saddest page in David's history, when "the man after God's own heart" became stained with the double crime of adultery and murder. We might have pictured to ourselves, indeed, the workings of a terrible remorse. We might have imagined how often, as he sat alone, his uneasy thoughts must have wandered to that grave beneath the walls of Rabbah, where the brave soldier whom he had murdered lay in his blood. We might have tried to fill up with words of confession and penitence and thanksgiving, those few syllables, "I have sinned," which are all the history records. But what a light is cast upon that long period of remorseful struggle not yet turned into godly sorrow, by those words in the thirty-second Psalm: "While I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day, for thy hand was heavy upon me day and night, and my moisture was turned into the drought of summer." What a keen, irrepressible sense of his crime in that cry in the fifty-first; "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation." What a knowledge of sin, not only in act, but in its bitter and hidden root — a sinful nature, in the acknowledgment: "Behold, in iniquity I was brought forth, and in sin did my mother conceive me." What a yearning for purity, for renewal,

for conformity to the will of God, in that humble, earnest pleading, "Create for me a clean heart, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me." What a clinging, as of a child to a father, in the prayer, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." What a sense of the joy of forgiveness and reconciliation, when, raised up again and restored, he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is taken away, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah reckoneth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." It is confessions, prayers, vows, like those recorded in his Psalms, which reveal to us the true man, which help us better to understand him than many histories, many apologies.

*Character of David.* — But as David's life thus shines in his poetry, so also does his character. That character was no common one. It was strong with all the strength of man, tender with all the tenderness of woman. Naturally brave, his courage was heightened and confirmed by that faith in God which never, in the worst extremity, forsook him. Naturally warm-hearted, his affections struck their roots deep into the innermost centre of his being. In his love for his parents, for whom he provided in his own extreme peril — in his love for his wife Michal — for his friend Jonathan, whom he loved as his own soul — for his darling Absalom, whose death almost broke his heart — even for the infant, whose loss he dreaded, — we see the same man, the same depth and truth, the same tenderness of personal affection. On the other hand, when stung by a sense of wrong or injustice, his sense of which was peculiarly keen, he could flash out into strong words and strong deeds. He could hate with the same fervor that he loved. Evil men and evil things, all that was at war with goodness and with God — for these he found no abhorrence too deep, scarcely any imprecations too strong. Yet he was, withal, placable and ready to forgive. He could exercise a prudent self-control, if he was occasionally impetuous. His true courtesy, his chivalrous generosity to his foes, his rare delicacy, his rare self-denial, are all traits which present themselves most forcibly as we read his history. He is the truest of heroes in the genuine elevation of his character, no less than in the extraordinary incidents of his life. Such a man cannot wear a mask in his writings. Depth, tenderness, fervor, mark all his poems.

The third Psalm, written, there can be little doubt, as the title informs us, on his flight from Absalom, combines many traits: — his undaunted courage: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me: I will not fear ten thousands of the people, who have set themselves against me round about" (ver. 5, 6); his strong convic-

tion that he had right on his side, and that therefore his foes would be overthrown: "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheekbone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly" (ver. 7); the generous prayer for his misguided subjects: "Thy blessing be upon thy people" (ver. 8).

So again, in the fifth Psalm, what burning words of indignation against the enemies of God and of his chosen: "Punish thou them, O God; let them fall from their counsels; in the multitude of their transgressions cast them away; for they have rebelled against thee" (ver. 10). (Comp. vii. 14-16.) In the seventh, what a keen sense of injury, what a lofty, chivalrous spirit: "O Jehovah my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto them that was at peace with me (yea, rather, I have rescued him that without any cause was my enemy); let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and make my glory abide in the dust" (ver. 3-5). In the fifteenth, what a noble figure of stainless honor, of the integrity which can stand both before God and before man! In the sixteenth (ver. 8-11), seventeenth (ver. 8-15), and eighteenth (ver. 1, 2), what deep personal affection towards God — an affection tender as it is strong, yet free from the sentimentalism which has so often degraded the later religious poetry of the church!

One Psalm in particular exhibits with singular beauty and truth both sides of David's character. It is the sixty-third. The same tenderness of natural affection, the same depth of feeling, which breathes in every word of his elegy upon Jonathan, is here found chastened and elevated, as he pours out his soul towards God. It is the human heart which stretches out the arms of its affections, yearning, longing for the presence and love of him who is more precious to it than life itself. This is the one side of the Psalm. The other is almost startling in the abruptness of its contrast, yet strikingly true and natural. It breathes the sternness, almost the fierceness, of the ancient warrior, hard beset by his enemies. From that lofty strain of heavenly musing with which the Psalm opens, he turns to utter his vow of vengeance against the traitors who are leagued against him; he triumphs in the prospect of their destruction. They shall perish, so he hopes, in his sight, and their carcases shall be the prey of jackals in the wilderness.

I have lingered thus long upon David, upon his character and his writings, because, in even a brief outline of Hebrew poetry, he, of necessity, occupies a foremost place, and because the Book of Psalms is almost identified with his name. Nor must it be forgotten, that he



not only thus personally contributed more than any other individual to the great national collection of religious songs and hymns, but that he may be said to have founded a school of sacred poetry among the Jews. Asaph, Heman, and Ethan (or Jeduthun), whom he appointed as his three chief musicians, were all, it would appear, poets; the first of them so famous as to have reached to a position almost equal to that of David himself. Some of the Psalms, it is true, which go by his name could not have been written by him, as they bear manifest traces of later times. Others are, with more probability, ascribed to him. And these, the Psalms of the sons of Korah, and a few which are anonymous, have many resemblances of thought and expression to those of David. He was the model after which they copied; his the fire which kindled theirs. So great a poet could not but have had a host of imitators.

*Solomon.*—Under Solomon, religious poetry does not seem to have flourished. His own tastes and pursuits were of another kind. The Proverbs can scarcely be called poetry, except that they are cast in a rhythmical form. They are at least only the poetry of a sententious wisdom; they never rise to the height of passion. The earlier portions of the book contain connected pieces of moral teaching, which may be styled didactic poems. In two passages especially (iii. 13–20; viii. 22–31), where Wisdom is described, we have a still loftier strain. But there was no hand now to wake the echoes of the harp of David.<sup>1</sup> Lyric poetry had yielded to the wisdom of the *mâshâl*, the proverb, or parable; the age of reflection had succeeded to the age of passion, the calmness of manhood to the heat of youth. Solomon is said, indeed, as has already been remarked, to have written a thousand and five songs (1 Kings v. 12); but only two Psalms, according to their Hebrew titles, go by his name; and of these, one, the seventy-second, may perhaps have been written by him; the other, the hundred and twenty-seventh, most probably is of much later date.

Besides these, two other of the poetical books of the Bible have been commonly ascribed to Solomon. One of them bears his name, “The Song of Songs which is Solomon’s;” the other, whether written by him or not, represents with singular truth and fidelity the various phases of a life like that of Solomon. But Ecclesiastes is not a poem. It is the record of a long struggle with the perplexities, the doubts, the misgivings, which must beset a man of large experience and large

<sup>1</sup> Unless, indeed, we assume with Delitzsch that Psalm lxxxviii., which is attributed to Heman, and Psalm lxxxix., to Ethan, were written in the time of Solomon. From 1 Kings iv. 31 it may perhaps be concluded that Asaph was already dead.

wisdom, who tries to read the riddle of the world, before his heart has been chastened by submission, and his spirit elevated by trust in God. The Song of Songs is a graceful and highly-finished idyll. No pastoral poetry in the world was ever written, so exquisite in its music, so bright in its enjoyment of nature, or presenting so true a picture of faithful love.<sup>1</sup> This is a poem not unworthy to be called "the Song of Songs," as surpassing all others, but it is very different from the poetry of the Psalms.

*Poetry in the Time of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah.*—From the days of Solomon till the Captivity, the cultivation of lyric poetry languished among the Hebrews, with two memorable exceptions. These were in the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. Both monarchs exerted themselves to restore the Temple worship, and to provide for the musical celebration of its services. To both, in circumstances of no common peril, were vouchsafed wonderful deliverances, which called forth hymns of praise and thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup> Both were engaged in meritorious efforts for the promotion and cultivation of learning. Jehoshaphat appointed throughout his dominions public instructors, an institution similar, apparently, to that of the Carlovingian *missi*; Hezekiah, who has been termed the Pisistratus of the Hebrew history,<sup>3</sup> established a society of learned men (Prov. xxv. 1), whose duty it was to provide for the collection and preservation of all the scattered remains of the earlier literature. To their pious labors we are doubtless indebted for many Psalms which would otherwise have perished. The arrangement of some portion, at least, of the present Psalter, it may reasonably be supposed, was completed under their superintendence. Smaller separate collections were combined into one; and this was enriched partly by the discovery of older hymns and songs, and partly by the addition of new.<sup>4</sup> A fresh impulse was given to the cultivation of Psalmody. The use of the ancient sacred music was revived, and the king commanded that the Psalms of David and of Asaph should be sung, as of old time, in the Temple. He himself encouraged the taste for this kind of poetry by his own example. One plaintive strain of his, written on his recovery from sickness, has been preserved in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (chap. xxxviii.). In some Latin Psalters, several odes, supposed to belong to the time of the Assyrian invasion, have his name prefixed to them.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the proper place to enter upon the question of the religious meaning of this book; I am speaking of it simply as poetry.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. xx. 21, 29; xxix. 25, 30.

<sup>3</sup> See Delitzsch, *Commentar über den Psalter*, ii. 377.

<sup>4</sup> For the proof of this, see below, Chap. iv.

How far any of the Psalms found in our existing collection can be placed in the time of Jehoshaphat is doubtful; on this point critics are divided; but there can be no doubt that several are rightly assigned to the reign of Hezekiah. Amongst these are a number of beautiful poems by the Korahite singers. The forty-second (and forty-third) and eighty-fourth Psalms were written, it has been conjectured<sup>1</sup> by a priest or levite carried away into captivity by the Assyrians. The forty-sixth, forty-seventh, and forty-eighth still more certainly refer to that period. These must all have been written shortly after the overthrow of Sennacherib and his army. The first has many striking coincidences of thought and expression with the prophecies of Isaiah, delivered not very long before, under Ahaz. The last opens with a vivid picture of the approach of the Assyrian army, and of its sudden and complete overthrow—a picture rivalling in its graphic force and concentrated energy the delineations of the same prophet in sight of the same catastrophe—and concludes with a grand burst of religious and patriotic exultation, such as might naturally be called forth by an occasion so memorable. Religion and patriotism are here blended in one, and find, united, their truest and noblest expression.<sup>2</sup> To the same period of the Assyrian invasion may be referred the sixty-fifth and seventy-sixth Psalms,<sup>3</sup> and possibly, also, the seventy-fifth.

But from this time till the return from the Captivity, comparatively few Psalms were written. It is probable, indeed, that as there was no period during the existence of the Jewish monarchy when the voice of prophets was not heard, so also there was no long period during which the sweet singers of Israel were altogether silent. The prophets themselves were Psalmists: Jonah (chap. ii.), Isaiah (chap. xii.), Habakkuk (chap. iii.), were all lyric poets. It would be but natural that, in some instances, their sacred songs should be incorporated in the public liturgies. After the Exile, when the prophets took so active a part in the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of its services, this seems almost certainly to have been the case.<sup>4</sup> Before the Exile the same thing may have happened. Two Psalms—the thirty-first and the seventy-first—have been supposed by eminent critics to have been

<sup>1</sup> Bleek, *Einl. in das Alt Test.*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> See the Notes on these Psalms.

<sup>3</sup> The seventy-sixth is expressly styled in the Inscription of the lxx. ὡδὴ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσυρίον. With less probability they entitle Ps. lxxx. ψαλμὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου.

<sup>4</sup> Several of the later Psalms are, by the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate, said to have been written by Haggai and Zechariah. See the Article “Zechariah,” in Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible.

written by Jeremiah; a supposition which derives countenance from their general character, from the tone of sorrowful tenderness which prevades them, from the many turns of expression like those to be met with in the writings of the prophet, and, in the case of the latter Psalm, also from its inscription in the Septuagint, according to which it was a favorite with the Rechabites and the earlier exiles.

*The Babylonish Captivity.* — Even in Babylon itself some Psalms were written. There the hundred and second Psalm was evidently composed, towards the close of the Seventy Years, and in prospect of the speedy restoration of the captives to the land of their fathers; there possibly, also, at an earlier period, the seventy-fourth and the seventy-ninth, which describe with so much force of pathos the sack of Jerusalem, the burning of the Temple, and the horrible slaughter of the inhabitants.

Still, during the five hundred years which elapsed from the death of David to the time of Ezra, a period as long as from the days of Chaucer to our own, no great successors to David appeared; no era but that of Hezekiah, as has already been observed, was famous for its sacred singers. Here and there a true Israelite, in his own distress, or oppressed by the sins and calamities of his nation, poured out his complaint before God; or for his own or his people's deliverance sang aloud his song of thanksgiving. And some few of these songs and complaints may have been collected and added to the earlier Psalms; some even, whose authors were unknown, may have been ascribed to David, the great master of lyric poetry. But what Eichhorn has remarked, remains true, that the Psalms belong, as a whole, not to many, but chiefly to two or three periods of Jewish history, — to the age of David, to that of Hezekiah, to the return from the Babylonish captivity.

This, indeed, is only in accordance with what has been observed in other nations, that certain great crises of history are most favorable to poetry. From the throes and travail-pangs of a nation's agony are born the most illustrious of her sons in arts as well as in arms. The general commotion and upheaving, the stir and ferment of all minds, the many dazzling occasions which arise for the exercise of the loftiest powers, — all these things give a peculiar impulse, a higher aim, a nobler resolve, to those who, by the prerogative even of their natural gifts, are destined to be the leaders of the intellectual world. Hence, likewise, poets appear in clusters or constellations; for only in seasons of great peril, or signal and splendid triumph, are those deeper and stronger feelings called forth which are the soul of the truest and most perfect poetry.

*Revival of Lyric Poetry after the Exile.* — Such a crisis to the Jews



was the return from the Captivity. And, accordingly, to this period a very considerable number of Psalms, chiefly in the fourth and fifth books, may without hesitation be referred. The Jews had carried with them to Babylon their sacred music, and the Psalms of David and his singers. The familiar words associated with so many happy memories, with the best and holiest hours of their lives, must often have soothed the weariness of exile, even if their hearts were too heavy to sing the song of Jehovah in a strange land. The fact that their heathen masters "required of them a song" to enliven their banquets, shows how great a skill in music they possessed, and how well it was appreciated. Nor did exile make them forget their cunning. When the first joyful caravan returned under Zerubbable, we are particularly informed that it comprised *singing men and singing women*. The first expression of their joy was in Psalms. Many of the beautiful little songs in that exquisite collection entitled "Pilgrim Songs," or "Songs of the Goings-up," must have been first called forth by the recollection of their *going up* from Babylon to Jerusalem, if not first sung by the way. They are full of touching allusions to their recent captivity, full of pious affection for their land, their city, their temple. They were afterwards comprised in one volume, and were then intended for the use of the pilgrims who *went up* from all parts of the Holy Land to keep the yearly festivals in the second Temple. For the worship now restored there, — and restored with something of its former splendor, notwithstanding all that had been irreparably lost when the beautiful house wherein their fathers had worshipped was laid in ashes, — many hymns and songs were especially composed. Amongst these was that long series of Psalms which open or close with the triumphant Hallelujah, a nation's great thanksgiving, the celebration of a deliverance so wonderful, that it eclipsed even that which before had been ever regarded as the most signal instance of God's favor towards them, the deliverance of their fathers from the bondage in Egypt. One portion of these Psalms (cxiii.—cxviii.), "the Hallâl,"<sup>1</sup> or, as it was sometimes called, "the Egyptian Hallâl," as if with the purpose of bringing together the two memorable epochs of the national history, was sung at the great festivals in the second Temple, at the Passover, at Pentecost, at the Feast of Tabernacles, and also at the Feast of Dedication and at the New Moons. This was doubtless "the hymn" which our Lord and his apostles are said to have sung<sup>2</sup> at his last solemn Passover before he suffered.

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch, Psalmen, ii. 160, note. He points out that "the Great Hallêl" is the name, not of these Psalms, but of Ps. cxxxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26.

Nearly all these later poems are in character and style unmistakably different from the earlier. They have the air and coloring of another age, of a different state of society. They are, for the most part, no longer individual, but national—a circumstance which of itself, perhaps, in some instances, abates their interest. They want the terseness, the energy, the fire of the Psalms of David. They have neither the bold vehemence nor the abrupt transitions which mark his poetry. They flow in a smoother and gentler current. We hardly find in the anthems which were intended for the service of the second Temple the vigor, the life, the splendor, the creative power conspicuous in those which, when the ark was carried to its resting-place on the holy mountain, rolled from the lips of “the great congregation,” like “the voice of many waters,” beneath the glorious canopy of a Syrian heaven. The last age of Hebrew poetry, if poetical excellence alone be considered, was scarcely equal to the first. But it has its own peculiar interest; it was a second spring, and it was the last.

*Maccabean Psalms.*—One question remains to be considered before we conclude this rapid and necessarily very imperfect sketch of Hebrew lyric poetry. Are any of the Psalms in our present Psalter later than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah? Three or four critics, with that strange perverseness so often to be found in minds naturally rather acute than profound, have insisted that more than one half of the entire collection is as late as the days of the Maccabees. But this singular literary heresy apart, the verdict is almost unanimous the other way; the large majority have maintained that not a single Psalm in the collection can be brought down to a period so late. It has been argued and repeated, again and again, that the history of the canon precludes the possibility of Maccabean Psalms. That history shows us, it has been said, that the whole volume had long before received its recognized place as a canonical book. The argument advanced on this side of the question rests on the following grounds: First, in the Prologue to the Book of Ecclesiastes, written some time before the outbreak of the Maccabean struggle, a threefold division of the Scriptures is recognized—the law, the prophets, and “the other books of the fathers.” This last expression has been generally supposed to denote that division of the Scriptures commonly called the *Hagiographa*, and in which the Psalms were comprised. Secondly, we are told, in the Second Book of Maccabees (ii. 13), that Nehemiah made a collection of the sacred writings which included “the works of David.” Hence it has been inferred that the Psalter was finally brought to its present shape, and recognized as complete, in the time of Nehemiah. But this is

thoroughly to misunderstand the nature of the formation of the canon, which was manifestly a very gradual work.<sup>1</sup> Even granting that by “the works of David” we are to understand a general collection of Psalms, it does not follow that the collection contained the exact number, neither more nor less, now comprised in the Psalter. The canon itself was not closed under Nehemiah. Additions were made by him to other books. Why should not additions be made, at a later period, to the Psalter? Ewald himself, who strenuously maintains that no Psalms are so late as the Maccabean period, admits, nevertheless, that under Judas Maccabeus a large number of books were added to the canon — the Proverbs, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Job, Daniel, Esther, the Chronicles.<sup>2</sup> But if so, on what possible grounds can it be alleged that the Psalter, merely because collected into a whole under Nehemiah, was finally closed against all later additions?

A far stronger argument on that side of the question would be found in the Septuagint version, if it could be shown that the translation of the Psalms was finished at the same time with that of the Pentateuch, under Ptolemy Lagi (B.C. 323–284). This, however, cannot be proved, though the expression in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus may seem to imply it. But it is worthy of notice that the writer of the First Book of the Maccabees is evidently acquainted with the Alexandrine version, and that this version, though it ascribes some Psalms to Haggai and Zechariah, mentions none of a later date.

The question, therefore, still remains an open one; and there is no reason, so far as the history of the canon is concerned, why we should refuse to admit the existence of Maccabean Psalms. Psalms like the forty-fourth, the seventy-fourth, and the seventy-ninth, seem more easily explained by referring them to that period of Jewish history than to any other; though the last two, as has already been remarked, may, not without some show of probability, be referred to the time of the Chaldean invasion.<sup>3</sup>

Such, in its merest outline, is the history of sacred psalmody among the Hebrews. It occupies, between its extreme limits, a period of a thousand years, from Moses to Nehemiah, or perhaps even to a later age. During a large portion of that period the Psalms shine like “a

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Westcott’s able article on the “Canon” in Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> The passage in 2 Maccabees ii. 13, is as follows: ἐξηγούντο δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνηματισμοῖς τοῖς κατὰ τὸν Νεεμίαν τὰ αὐτά, καὶ ὡς καταβαλλόμενος βιβλιοθήκην ἐπισυνήγαγε τὰ περὶ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ προφητῶν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Δαυὶδ καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βασιλέων περὶ ἀναθεμάτων.

<sup>3</sup> See more on this subject in the Introduction to those Psalms.

light in a dark place." They tell us how, amidst corruption, idolatry, and apostasy, God was truly loved and faithfully worshipped. Not only as "given by inspiration of God" are they a witness to the fact that God was teaching his people. So far they are what the prophetic books are. Psalmists, as well as prophets, were chosen by him to be the interpreters of his will, to declare his truth. Both the one and the other are the organs and vehicles of the divine communications. But there is this further significance in the Psalms. They are not only — not chiefly, it may be said — the voice of God to man; they are the voice of man to God. They are prayers, indeed, far beyond merely human utterances; they are prayers which the Spirit of God himself has given as the model of all prayer and intercession; but they bear witness, at the same time, to the reality of the soul's spiritual life in those who uttered them. Truly divine, they are also truly human. They go infinitely beyond us; they have a depth and height and length and breadth of meaning to which the best of us can never fully attain. We feel that they rise into regions of peaceful and holy communion with God to which we may aspire, but which we have not reached. But meanwhile they have a reality which satisfies us that they are the true expression of human hearts pouring themselves out towards God, though often themselves carried beyond themselves through the power of the Holy Ghost.

There are times, no doubt, when we read one and another of these Psalms with something like a feeling of disappointment. There are times when we cannot repress the wish to know more of the circumstances which called them forth, of the feelings, the views, the hopes, with which they were written. We ask ourselves what the peril is from which the sacred poet has barely escaped; who the enemies were whose machinations so terrified him; what the victories, the successes, the deliverances which he celebrates with such loud songs of thanksgiving. We should read them, we think, with fresh interest, could we tell with certainty when and by whom they were written. But if we could do this, if the picture of those circumstances were clear and well-defined, we might lose more than we should gain. For the very excellence of the Psalms is their universality. They spring from the deep fountains of the human heart; and God, in his providence and by his Spirit, has so ordered it that they should be for his church an everlasting heritage. Hence they express the sorrows, the joys, the aspirations, the struggles, the victories not of one man, but of all. And if we ask, How comes this to pass? the answer is not far to seek: One object is ever before the eyes and the heart of the Psalmists. All



enemies, all distresses, all persecutions, all sins are seen in the light of God. It is to him that the cry goes up; it is to him that the heart is laid bare; it is to him that the thanksgiving is uttered. This it is which makes them so true, so precious, so universal. No surer proof of their inspiration can be given than this, that they are "not of an age, but for all time," that the ripest Christian can use them in the fulness of his Christian manhood, though the words are the words of one who lived centuries before the coming of Christ in the flesh.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE USE OF THE PSALTER IN THE CHURCH AND BY INDIVIDUALS.

Deep as is the interest attaching to the Psalter as the great store-house of sacred poetry, and vast as is its importance considered as a record of spiritual life under the old dispensation, scarcely less interest and importance attach to it with reference to the position it has ever occupied both in the public worship of the church and in the private life of Christians. No single book of Scripture, not even of the New Testament, has, perhaps, ever taken such hold on the *heart* of Christendom. None, if we may dare judge, unless it be the Gospels, has had so large an influence in moulding the affections, sustaining the hopes, purifying the faith of believers. With its words, rather than with their own, they have come before God. In these they have uttered their desires, their fears, their confessions, their aspirations, their sorrows, their joys, their thanksgivings. By these their devotion has been kindled and their hearts comforted. The Psalter has been, in the truest sense, the Prayer-book both of Jews and Christians.

The nature of the volume accounts for this; for it is in itself, to a very great extent, the converse of the soul with God. Hence it does not teach us so much what we are to do, or what we are to be, as how we are to pray; or, rather, it teaches us what we are to do and to be through prayer. "This," says Luther, "is the great excellence of the Psalter; that other books, indeed, make a great noise about the *works* of the saints, but say very little about their *words*. But herein is the pre-eminence of the Psalter, and hence the sweet fragrance which it sheds, that it not only tells of the works of the saints, but also of the words with which they spake to God and prayed, and still speak and pray."

*Psalms as used in the Public Liturgies.*—Nor is the influence of this book on the church at large and on our public liturgies less remarkable. "The primitive church," says Bishop Taylor, "would admit no man to the superior orders of the clergy, unless among other pre-

required dispositions, they could say all David's Psalter by heart."<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, in the second century, tells us that the Christians were wont to sing Psalms at their agapae, and that they were sung antiphonally. From the earliest times they formed an essential part of divine service. We learn from Augustine and other writers, that, after the reading of the Epistle, a whole Psalm was sung, or partly read, partly sung—taking them in the order in which they stood in the Psalter,—and that then followed the reading of the Gospel.<sup>2</sup> Hilary, Chrysostom, Augustine, all mention the use of the Psalms in the public service, and describe them, sometimes as being sung by the whole congregation, at others as being recited by one individual, who was followed by the rest. The practice of antiphonal chanting was common in the East, and was introduced by Ambrose into the Western church. Either the congregation sung the verses of the Psalms alternately, in two choirs, the one answering to the other, or, sometimes, the first half of the verse was sung with a single voice, and the other half by the whole congregation.

*Use of particular Psalms.*—We learn from the Talmud, as well as from the inscriptions of the LXX, that certain Psalms were appointed in the second Temple for the service of particular days. The same custom also obtained in the Christian church. The morning service used to begin with Psalm lxiii., the evening service with Psalm cxli. In Passion week, Psalm xxii. was sung. Since the time of Origen, seven Psalms have received the name of Penitential Psalms, which were used in the special additional services appointed for the season of Lent. These were Psalms vi., xxxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxliii.<sup>3</sup>

*Use of the Psalter in the Church.*—In the Church of Rome, Psalms occupy a prominent place in the service of the mass. The oldest mass-books consist of three parts: the sacramentary, containing the prayers of the officiating priest; the lectionary, containing the lessons from the Bible; and the antiphonary, containing the Psalms and antiphons, or verses from the Psalms and prophets which served as the introit, and received the name from their being sung responsively. The term "gradual" in the mass is a remnant of the ancient custom before referred to. The Psalm which was sung before the Gospel was called *responsorium graduale*, because it was intoned by two voices from the

<sup>1</sup> Sermon on the Whole Duty of the Clergy. Works (Eden's edition), Vol. viii. p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> August. Serm. 176, Opp. tom. v. pp. 1212–14. Paris, 1837.

<sup>3</sup> The seven Psalms were selected with reference to the sprinkling of the leper seven times in order to his cleansing, and the command to Naaman to wash himself seven times in the Jordan, or, as others say, as corresponding to the seven deadly sins. (See Delitzsch on Ps. cxliii).

steps (*gradus*, whence the name) of the *ambon*, and then taken up by the people. In the seven canonical hours, as they are called, the Psalms form no inconsiderable part of the service; and the Romish priest prays them daily in his breviary. Our own church has provided for the daily recital of some portion of them in her services, and has so distributed them in her liturgy that the whole book is repeated every month. In a very large part of the Reformed churches they take the place of hymns. Thrown into metrical versions, they are probably sung by most congregations of professing Christians amongst ourselves, little as any metrical version has succeeded in preserving the spirit and glow of the original. In many places, especially among Protestant communities abroad, it is usual to bind up the Psalter with the New Testament, from the feeling, doubtless, that, more than any other part of the Old, it tends directly to edification. Nor is this feeling modern, or peculiar to Protestants. Two facts will show how widely it has prevailed. The one is, that when the Council of Toulouse, in 1229, forbade the use of the Bible to the laity, a special exception was made in favor of the Psalter; the other is, that the Psalter was the first portion of the Hebrew Bible which ever issued from the press.

To follow the history of such a book, to listen to the testimonies which have been borne to it by God's saints in all ages, must be a matter of no little interest. I will, therefore, set down here some of the most striking of these testimonies.

*Athanasius.*—I will first cite Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria in the fourth century, who, in his epistle to Marcellinus, prefixed to his Interpretation of the Psalms, professes to tell him the opinion of an old man whom he once met, concerning the Book of Psalms. He says:

“He who takes this book in his hands with admiration and reverence, goes through all the prophecies concerning the Saviour which he finds there as in the other Scriptures; but the other Psalms he reads as if they were his own words, and he who hears them is pricked at the heart as if he said them himself.” No one, he goes on to observe, can take the words of the patriarchs, or Moses, or Elijah, to himself, and use them always as his own; but he who uses the Psalms “is as one who speaks his own words, and each one sings them as if they had been written for his own case, and not as if they had been spoken by some one else, or meant to apply to some one else.” Again: “To me, indeed, it seems that the Psalms are to him who sings them as a mirror, wherein he may see himself and the motions of his soul, and with like feelings utter them. So also one who hears a Psalm read, takes it as if it were spoken concerning himself, and either, convicted by his own conscience,



will be pricked at heart and repent, or else, hearing of that hope which is to God-wards, and the succor which is vouchsafed to them that believe, leaps for joy, as though such grace were specially made over to him, and begins to utter his thanksgivings to God" (§ 12).

Again: "In the other books (of Scripture) are discourses which dissuade us from those things which are evil; but in this has been sketched out for us how we should abstain from things evil. For instance, we are commanded to repent, and to repent is to cease from sin; but here has been sketched out for us how we must repent, and what we must say when we repent. And again, Paul hath said: 'Tribulation worketh patience for the soul, and patience, proof,' etc.; but in the Psalms we find written and engraven how we ought to bear afflictions, and what we should say in our afflictions, and what after our afflictions, and how each one is proved, and what are the words of them that hope in the Lord. Again, there is a command in everything to give thanks; but the Psalms teach us also what to say when we give thanks. Then when we hear from others: 'They that will live godly shall be persecuted,' by the Psalms we are taught what we ought to utter when we are driven into exile, and what words we should lay before God, both in our persecutions and when we have been delivered out of them. We are enjoined to bless the Lord, and to confess to him. But in the Psalms we have a pattern given us, both as to how we should praise the Lord and with what words we can suitably confess to him. And, in every instance, we shall find these divine songs suited to us, to our feelings, and our circumstances" (§ 10).

These words of Athanasius are doubly interesting when we remember what his own life had been; how often he had been driven into exile; what persecutions he had endured; from how many perils he had been delivered.

*Ambrose.*—Let us hear next Ambrose, bishop of Milan in the fourth century, in the preface to his exposition of twelve of the Psalms of David.<sup>1</sup> "Although all divine Scripture breathes the grace of God, yet sweet beyond all others is the book of Psalms."... "History instructs, the law teaches, prophecy announces, rebuke chastens, mortality [?morality] persuades: in the book of Psalms we have the fruit of all these, and a kind of medicine for the salvation of man."... "What is more delightful than a Psalm? It is the benediction of the people, the praise of God, the thanksgiving of the multitude, ... the voice of the church, the harmonious confession of our faith," etc.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Opp. Venet. 1748, tom. ii. In Psalmum I. Enarr.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, in enumerating other excellences of the Psalms, he throws a

*Augustine.* — With deep feeling Augustine narrates what the Psalms were to him in the days of his first conversion to God. "What words did I utter to thee, O my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs, those pious breathings which suffer no swelling spirit of pride, when I was as yet uninstructed in all the truth and fulness of thy love, a catechumen in that country house, keeping holiday with the catechumen Alypius, whilst my mother remained with us, in the garb of a woman (but), with the faith of a man, with the calmness of an old woman, with the affection of a mother, with the piety of a Christian. What words did I utter to thee in those Psalms; how was my love to thee inflamed thereby; how did I burn to recite them, were it possible, through the whole world, against the proud swelling of men! And yet they are sung through the whole world, and there is none who is hidden from thy heat.<sup>1</sup> How vehement and how sharp was my grief and indignation against the Manicheans;<sup>2</sup> and yet, again, how I pitied them because they knew not these sacraments, these medicines, and showed their insanity in rejecting the antidote which might have restored them to sanity! How I wish they could have been somewhere near me, and, without my knowing that they were there, could have seen my face and heard my words when I read the fourth Psalm, in that retirement in which I was, and have known all that that Psalm was to me!" And then he goes through the whole Psalm, describing the feelings with which he read it, and the application which he made of it to his own case — an application very wide indeed of the proper meaning of the Psalm, but one which, nevertheless, poured light and peace and joy into his soul.

*Luther.* — We pass on to the time of the Reformation. Let us hear how two of its great master spirits speak. "Nowhere," says Luther, in his preface to the Psalter (published in 1529), "will you find more happily or more significantly expressed the feelings of a soul full of joy and exultation, than in the Psalms of thanksgiving, or Psalms of praises. For there you may look into the hearts of the saints, as you would into paradise or into the open heaven, and note with what wonderful variety there spring up here and there the beautiful blossoms and the most brilliant stars of the sweetest affections towards God and his benefits. On the other hand, nowhere will you find described in more expressive curious light on the state of the churches in Milan during the celebration of divine service. "What difficulty there is," he says, "to procure silence in the church when the lessons are read! If one speaks, all the rest make a noise. When a Psalm is read, it produces silence of itself. All speak, and no one makes a noise."

<sup>1</sup> In allusion to Ps. xix. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Because, as rejecting the Old Testament, they robbed themselves of the Psalms.

words mental distress, pain, and grief of soul, than in the Psalms of temptations or lamentations, as in the sixth Psalm, and others like it. There death itself, hell itself, you see painted in their proper colors; there you see all black, all gloomy, in view of the divine anger and despair. So likewise when the Psalms speak of hope or of fear, they so describe these feelings in their own native words, that no Demosthenes, no Cicero, could express them more to the life or more happily."

Again, in the preface to his *Operationes in Psalmos*, he observes: "This book is, in my judgment, of a different character from the other books. For in the rest we are taught both by word and by example what we ought to do; this not only teaches, but imparts both the method and the practice with which to fulfil the word, and to copy the example. For we have no power of our own to fulfil the law of God, or to copy Christ; but only to pray and to desire that we may do the one and copy the other, and then, when we have obtained our request, to praise and give thanks. But what else is the Psalter, but prayer to God and praise of God; that is, a book of hymns? Therefore the most blessed Spirit of God, the father of orphans, and the teacher of infants, seeing that we know not what or how we ought to pray, as the apostle saith, and desiring to help our infirmities, after the manner of schoolmasters who compose for children letters or short prayers, that they may send them to their parents, so prepares for us in this book both the words and feelings with which we should address our Heavenly Father, and pray concerning those things which in the other books he had taught us we ought to do and to copy, that so a man may not feel the want of anything which is of import to his eternal salvation. So great is the loving care and grace of our God towards us, who is blessed for evermore."

*Calvin.*—The following passage from Calvin's preface to his Commentary will show the high value which he set upon the Psalms. "If," he says, "the church of God shall derive as much benefit from (the reading of) my commentaries as I have myself derived from the writing of them, I shall have no reason to repent of the labor I have taken upon me. . . . How varied and how splendid the wealth which this treasury contains, it is difficult to describe in words. Whatever I shall say, I know full well must fall far short of its worth. . . . This book, not unreasonably, am I wont to style an anatomy of all parts of the soul; for no one will discover in himself a single feeling whereof the image is not reflected in this mirror. Nay, all griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, and anxieties,—in short, all those tumultuous agitations wherewith the minds of men are wont to be tossed,—the

Holy Ghost hath here represented to the life. The rest of Scripture contains the commands which God gave to his servants to be delivered unto us. But here the prophets themselves, holding converse with God, inasmuch as they lay bare all their inmost feelings, invite or impel every one of us to self-examination, that of all the infirmities to which we are liable, and all the sins of which we are so full, none may remain hidden. It is a rare and singular advantage when, every hiding-place having been laid bare, the heart is cleansed from hypocrisy, that foulest of plagues, and is brought forth to the light. Lastly, if calling upon God be the greatest safeguard of our salvation, seeing that no better and surer rule thereof can be found anywhere than in this book, the further any man shall have advanced in the understanding of it, the greater will be his attainment in the school of God. Earnest prayer springs first from a feeling of our necessity, and then from faith in the promises. Here the readers will both best be awakened to a due sense of their own evils, and warned to seek the proper remedies for them.

“Moreover, whatever would serve to encourage us in our prayer to God is shown us in this book. Nor yet are they only promises that meet us here; but we have often set before us one who, with the invitation of God calling one way and the hinderances of the flesh another, girds himself bravely to prayer; so that, if ever at any time we be harassed by doubts of one kind or another, we may learn to wrestle against them, till our soul takes wings and mounts up with glad freedom unto God. Nor that only, but that through hesitations, fears, alarms, we may still strive to pray, till we rejoice for the consolation. For this must be our resolve, though distrust shut the door to our prayers, that we must not give way when our hearts are shaken and restlessly disturbed, till faith comes forth victorious from its struggles. And in many passages we may see the servants of God so tossed to and fro in their prayers, that, almost crushed at times, they only win the palm after arduous efforts. On the one side, the weakness of the flesh betrays itself; on the other, the power of faith exerts itself. ... This only, in passing, is it worth while to point out, — that we have secured to us in this book, what is of all things most desirable, not only a familiar access unto God, but the right and the liberty to make known to him those infirmities which shame does not suffer us to confess to our fellow-men. Further, the sacrifice of praise, which God declares to be a sacrifice of sweetest savor, and most precious to him, we are here accurately instructed how to offer with acceptance. ... Rich, moreover, as the book is in all those precepts which tend to form a



holy, godly, and righteous life, yet chiefly will it teach us how to bear the cross, which is the true test of our obedience, when, giving up all our own desires, we submit ourselves to God, and so suffer our lives to be ordered by his will that even our bitterest distresses grow sweet because they come from his hand. Finally, not only in general terms are the praises of God's goodness uttered, teaching us so to rest in him alone, that pious spirits may look for his sure succor in every time of need, but the free forgiveness of sins, which alone reconciles God to us and secures to us true peace with him, is so commended that nothing is wanting to the knowledge of eternal salvation."

He adds, that his best understanding of the Psalms had come to him through the trials and conflicts which he had himself been called upon to pass through; that thus he was not only able to apply better whatever knowledge he had acquired, but could enter better into the design of each writer of the Psalms.

*Hooker.* — Hooker, reasoning in his immortal work with the sectaries of his times, and defending the use of Psalms in the Liturgy, says:

"They are not ignorant what difference there is between other parts of Scripture and Psalms. The choice and flower of all things profitable in other books the Psalms do both more briefly contain and more movingly also express, by reason of that poetical form wherewith they are written. . . . What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found. Hereof it is that we covet to make the Psalms especially familiar unto all. This is the very cause why we iterate the Psalms oftener than any other part of Scripture besides; the cause wherefore we inure the people together with their minister, and not the minister alone, to read them as other parts of Scripture he doth."<sup>1</sup>

*Donne.* — Donne says: "The Psalms are the manna of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, Eccl. Pol., Book v. chap. xxxvii. § 2.

As manna tasted to every man like that he liked best, so do the Psalms minister instruction and satisfaction to every man, in every emergency and occasion. David was not only a clear prophet of Christ himself, but of every particular Christian; he foretells what I, what any, shall do, and suffer, and say.”<sup>1</sup>

*Francke.*—In later times we find similar testimonies repeated in great abundance. A. H. Francke, in his *Explanation of the Psalms with a View to Edification* (Halle, 1731, Part I. p. 904), thus expresses himself: “So long as a man has not the Spirit of Christ, so long as he does not deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Christ, no Psalm seems sweet to him. He has no pleasure therein; it seems to him all like dry straw, in which he finds neither strength nor juice. But when he is himself led through a like course of suffering and affliction, when he is ridiculed, scorned, and mocked by the world for righteousness’ sake, and because he follows Christ, and sees what it is to press through all the hinderances which meet him from within and from without, and to serve God the Lord in truth,—then it is that he observes that in the heart of David far more must have gone on than that he should have troubled himself merely about his outward circumstances. He is conscious, in his daily struggle, of the same enmity, which has been put by God between Christ and Belial, between those who belong to Christ and those who belong to the devil, and that precisely the same contest in which so much is involved is described in the Psalms; and of which, in fact, even the first Psalm speaks, when it says, ‘Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,’ etc. He, therefore, that denies himself and the world, with all its greatness, with all the riches and the favor of men, who will have nothing but God’s word as his rule, and seeks to take a cheerful conscience with him to his death-bed, learns by experience what a real struggle it costs to effect this. But he who learns this, learns also how to understand the Psalms aright.”

*Herder.*—From many passages which might be quoted from Herder’s writings we select one: “Not merely as regards the contents, but also as regards the form, has this use of the Psalter been a benefit to the spirit and heart of men. As in no lyric poet of Greece or Rome do we find so much teaching, consolation, and instruction together, so has there scarcely ever been anywhere so rich a variation of tone in every kind of song as here. For two thousand years have these old Psalms been again and again translated and imitated in a variety of ways, and

<sup>1</sup> Donne, Sermon lxvi. Works, Vol. iii. p. 156 (Alford’s edition). See also, the Introduction to Ps. lxiii.

still so rich, so comprehensive is their manner, that they are capable of many a new application. They are flowers which vary according to each season and each soil, and ever abide in the freshness of youth. Precisely because this book contains the simplest lyric tones for the expression of the most manifold feelings, is it a hymn-book for all times.”<sup>1</sup>

*Bishop Horne.*—From Bishop Horne’s preface to his Commentary, I will quote a few lines, partly because of the striking coincidence of expression which they exhibit with two passages already quoted, the one from Donne, and the other from Calvin.

“Indited,” he says, “under the influence of him to whom all hearts are known, and events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. . . . He who hath once tasted their excellences will desire to taste them again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best.

“And now, could the author flatter himself that any one would take half the pleasure in reading the following exposition, which he hath taken in writing it, he would not fear the loss of his labor. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season; care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose, fresh as the morning, to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it; and he can truly say that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every Psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last, for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier hours than those which have been spent in these meditations on the songs of Zion he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along; for when thus engaged he counted no time. They are gone; but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet.”

*Irving.*—Irving in his preface to Bishop Horne’s work writes:

“The songs of Zion are comprehensive as the human soul and varied as human life; where no possible state of natural feeling shall not find itself tenderly expressed and divinely treated with appropriate remedies; where no condition of human life shall not find its rebuke or consolation; because they treat not life after the fashion of an age or people, but life in its rudiments, the life of the soul, with the joys and

<sup>1</sup> Abhandlungen und Briefen zur schönen Literatur. Sämmtliche Werke. Th. xvi. p. 17.

sorrows to which it is amenable, from concourse with the outward necessity of the fallen world. Which breadth of application they compass not by the sacrifice of lyrical propriety or poetical method; for if there be poems strictly lyrical, that is, whose spirit and sentiment move congenial with the movements of music, and which, by their very nature, call for the accompaniment of music, these odes of a people despised as illiterate are such. For pure pathos and tenderness of heart, for sublime imagination, for touching pictures of natural scenery, and genial sympathy with nature's various moods; for patriotism, whether in national weal or national woe; for beautiful imagery, whether derived from the relationship of human life, or the forms of the created universe; and for the illustration, by their help, of spiritual conditions. Moreover, for those rapid transitions in which the lyrical muse delighteth, — her lightsome graces at one time, her deep and full inspiration at another, her exuberance of joy and her lowest falls of grief, and for every other form of the natural soul which is wont to be shadowed forth by this kind of composition, — we challenge anything to be produced from the literature of all ages and countries, worthy to be compared with what we find even in the English version of the Book of Psalms.”<sup>1</sup>

This array of testimonies, so various and yet so accordant, shall be closed with two from our own time. The one is from one of the most original thinkers and most eloquent preachers whom our church has in these later times produced. The other is from the dying bed of one who was the ornament and the pride of a sister church on the continent. The first, unhappily, is but fragmentary.

*F. W. Robertson.* — “The value of the public reading of the Psalms,” says the late F. W. Robertson of Brighton, “is, that they express for us, indirectly, those deeper feelings which there would be a sense of indelicacy in expressing directly. . . . There are feelings of which we do not speak to each other; they are too sacred and too delicate. Such are most of our feelings to God. If we do speak of them, they lose their fragrance; become coarse; nay, there is even a sense of indelicacy and exposure. Now, the Psalms afford precisely the right relief for this feeling: wrapped up in the forms of poetry (metaphor, etc.), that which might seem exaggerated, is excused by those who do not feel it; while they who do, can read them, applying them without suspicion of uttering *their own* feelings. Hence their soothing power, and hence, while other portions of Scripture may become obsolete, they remain

<sup>1</sup> Collected Works, Vol. i. pp. 386, 387.



the most precious parts of the Old Testament. For the heart of man is the same in all ages.”<sup>1</sup>

“It is this truth of human feeling which makes the Psalms, more than any other portion of the Old Testament, the link of union between distant ages. The historical books need a rich store of knowledge before they can be a modern book of life; but the Psalms are the records of individual experience. Personal religion is the same in all ages. The depths of our humanity remain unruffled by the storms of ages which change the surface. This Psalm (the fifty-first), written three thousand years ago, might have been written yesterday — describes the vicissitudes of spiritual life in an Englishman, as truly as in a Jew. ‘Not of an age, but for all time.’”<sup>2</sup>

*Monod.* — Adolphe Monod, whilst suffering from the cruel malady of which he died, speaks thus to the friends who were gathered about his sick bed: “We must read the Psalms in order to understand the sufferings of David. The Psalms discover to us the inner man of David, and in the inner man of David they discover to us in some sort the inner man of all the prophets of God. Well, the Psalms are full of expressions of an unheard-of suffering. David speaks in them constantly of his evils, his sicknesses, his enemies without number. We can scarcely understand, in reading them, what he means by the enemies of which he speaks so constantly; but they discover to us at least an inner depth of affliction, of which, with the mere history of David in our hands, we should scarcely have formed an idea. It is one of the great advantages of the Psalms.” He then refers to the thirty-eighth Psalm as an illustration. Subsequently he says: “The capital object of the mission which David received of God for all generations in the church, was the composition of Psalms. Well, he composes his Psalms, or a great part of them, in the midst of the most cruel sufferings. Imagine then, bowed down by suffering, physical, moral, and spiritual, you were called upon to compose a Psalm, and that from the bosom of all these sufferings, and at the very moment when they were such as those which he describes in Psalm xxxviii., should issue hymns to the glory of God, and for the instruction of the church. What a triumph David gains over himself, and what a humiliation it is for us, who in our weakness are mostly obliged to wait till our sufferings are passed, in order to reap the fruit of them ourselves, or to impart the benefit to others. But David, in the midst of his sufferings, writes his Psalms. He writes his thirty-eighth Psalm whilst he undergoes those persecutions, those inward torments, that bitterness of sin. I know it may be said

<sup>1</sup> Sermon ix. (Second Series), p. 119.      <sup>2</sup> Sermon vii. (Second Series), p. 96.

that David wrote that thirty-eighth Psalm coldly, transporting himself into sufferings which he did not feel at the time, as the poet transports himself into sufferings which he has never experienced; but no, such a supposition offends you as much as it does me, — it is in the furnace, it is from the bosom of the furnace, that he writes these lines, which are intended to be the encouragement of the church in all ages. Oh power of the love of Christ! Oh renunciation of self-will! Oh grace of the true servant of God! Oh virtue of the apostle,<sup>1</sup> and virtue of the prophet, virtue of Christ in them, and of the Holy Ghost! For never man (of himself) would be capable of such a power of will, of such a triumph over the flesh.”<sup>2</sup>

How great, then, is the history of the Psalms! David sang them, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and all the prophets. With Psalms Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah celebrated their victories. Psalms made glad the heart of the exiles who returned from Babylon. Psalms gave courage and strength to the Maccabees in their brave struggles to achieve their country's independence, and were the repeated expression of their thanksgivings. The Lord of Psalmists, and the Son of David, by the words of a Psalm, proved himself to be higher than David; and sang Psalms with his apostles on the night before he suffered, when he instituted the Holy Supper of his love.<sup>3</sup> In his last, awful hour on the cross he expressed in the words of one Psalm, “His fear and his need of God,” and in the words of another gave up his spirit to his Father. With Psalms Paul and Silas praised God in the prison at midnight, when their feet were made fast in the stocks, and sang so loud that the prisoners heard them. And, after his own example, the apostle exhorts the Christians at Ephesus and Colossae to teach and admonish one another with Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Jerome tells us, that in his day the Psalms were to be heard in the fields and the vineyards of Palestine, and that they fell sweetly on the ear, mingling with the songs of birds, and the scent of flowers in the spring. The ploughman as he guided his plough chanted the Hallelujah, and the reaper, the vine-dresser, and the shepherd sang the songs of David. “These,” he says, “are our love-songs, these the instruments of our agriculture.” Sidonius Apollinaris makes his boatmen, as they urge their heavily laden barge up stream, sing Psalms, till the river-banks echo again with the Hallelujah, and beautifully applies the custom, in a figure, to the

<sup>1</sup> He had shortly before mentioned St. Paul, as an instance like that of David.

<sup>2</sup> *Adieux à ses Amis*, etc., pp. 101–106 (7<sup>e</sup> édit.). Paris, 1859.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 30

voyage of the Christian life.<sup>1</sup> With the verse of a Psalm, "Turn again, then, unto thy rest, O my soul," the pious Babylas, bishop of Antioch, comforted himself, while awaiting his martyrdom in the Decian persecution, saying, "From this we learn that our soul comes to rest when it is removed by death from this restless world." Paulla, the friend of Jerome, was seen by those who were gathered around her in her last hour to move her lips, and when they stooped to listen, they heard the words, "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." A Psalm was the best utterance for the overflowing joy of Augustine's heart at his conversion,<sup>2</sup> and a Psalm was his consolation when he lay upon his death-bed.<sup>3</sup> With the words of Psalms, Chrysostom comforted himself in his exile, writing thus: "When driven from the city, I cared nothing for it. But I said to myself, If the empress wishes to banish me, let her banish me; 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.'" And again: "David clothes me with armor, saying, 'I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.'" With the words of a Psalm, holy Bernard expired. With the words of a Psalm, Huss and Jerome of Prague gave up their souls, without fear, to God, in the midst of the fire. Chanting the twelfth verse of the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, with voices that rose high above the din of battle, the Protestant army rushed to victory at Courtras. With the voice of a Psalm, Luther entered Worms, singing brave defiance to pope and cardinals, and all the gates of hell. With Psalms, that faithful servant of God, Adolphe Monod, strengthened himself to endure the agonies of a lingering and painful disease. And in the biography of a late eminent prelate of our own church, no page possesses a deeper interest, a truer pathos, than that which records, that for many years before his death the fifty-first Psalm had been his nightly prayer.<sup>4</sup> And what shall I say more? The history of the Psalms is the history of the church, and the history of every heart in which has burned the love of God. It is a history not fully revealed in this world, but one which is written in heaven. It is a history which, could we know it, might teach us to hush many an angry thought, to recall many a bitter, hasty, uncharitable speech. The pages of that book have often been blotted with the tears of those whom others deemed hard and cold, and whom

<sup>1</sup> "Curvorum hinc chorus helciariorum  
 Responsantibus Alleluia ripis  
 Ad Christum levat amnicum celeusma.  
 Sic, sic psallite, nauta et viator!"

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> See Introduction, to Ps. xxxii.

<sup>4</sup> Memoir of Bishop Blomfield, Vol. ii. p. 266.

they treated with suspicion or contempt. Those words have gone up to God, mingled with the sighs or scarcely uttered in the heart-broken anguish of those whom pharisees called sinners, of those whom Christians denounced as heretics or infidels, but who loved God and truth above all things else. Surely it is holy ground. We cannot pray the Psalms without realizing in a very special manner the communion of saints, the oneness of the church militant and the church triumphant. we cannot pray the Psalms without having our hearts opened, our affections enlarged, our thoughts drawn heavenward. He who can pray them best is nearest to God, knows most of the Spirit of Christ, is ripest for heaven.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE THEOLOGY OF THE PSALMS.

THERE are some topics connected with the interpretation of the Psalms which have been the subject of so much discussion that it was scarcely possible to treat them satisfactorily in the notes. I propose, therefore in this chapter to handle them more at large. How far we are to look in the Psalms for predictions of the Messiah, or the hope of a future life; in what sense the assertions of innocence which meet us on the one hand, and the imprecations of vengeance on the other, are to be understood; these, and questions like these, must present themselves to every thoughtful reader of the Psalms; and to give some answer to these questions will now be my endeavor.

I. *The Messiah.* — The first question, and the most important, is this: What is the nature of the Messianic hope, as it meets us in the Psalms?

On this subject it may be said broadly that three views have been entertained.

1. *Modern Rationalistic Views.* — There have been expositors, more especially in recent times, who have gone so far as to affirm that none of the Psalms is in any proper sense Messianic, or that if the hope of the Messiah finds expression at all, it is traced in coloring so faint, in outlines so uncertain, that it ceases to be anything more than a vague anticipation at best. With such interpreters I shall not attempt to argue. To me the whole history of the Jewish nation becomes the most unintelligible of all enigmas, apart from the hope of him who was to come. This hope is interwoven with all the tissues of the web of that history, and is the stay and the strength of all. Nor can I understand how, with the historical fact before us of the promise given to David, we can hesitate to admit that in *his* Psalms, at least, some references to that promise would be found. A hope so great, a promise so distinctly given, must, by the very necessities of the case, have occupied the mind of David, and have reappeared in his Psalms. It

would be far more perplexing to account for the absence than for the presence of the Messianic hope in his writings.

2. *Patristic and Mediaeval Writers.*—Others, again, and more especially the Patristic and Mediaeval writers, have gone into the opposite extreme. To them every Psalm has some direct prophetic reference to our Lord, to the circumstances of his life or his passion. So Tertullian takes the whole of the first Psalm as a prophecy of Joseph of Arimathea; Augustine gives to each a reference to Christ and his church; and Albertus Magnus, asserting that it is a well-known fact that the whole book is concerning Christ (*constat quod totus liber iste de Christo est*), interprets the first Psalm “of Christ, and his body the church.

3. *Views of Interpreters since the Reformation.*—But all sober interpreters since the time of the Reformation, following the guidance of Luther and Calvin, have avoided both extremes of error. On the one hand, they have recognized the existence of the Messianic element; on the other, they have abandoned those strained and fanciful interpretations by which violence is done to the plain language of many Psalms, when they are regarded as predictive of our Lord.

*Common Interpretation of Messianic Psalms.*—Still much difference of opinion exists, more especially amongst English commentators, as to the principle of interpretation to be followed in those Psalms which are confessedly Messianic. One class of expositors, of whom Bishop Horsley may be taken as a chief representative, have laid it down as a certain principle, that whenever any part of a Psalm is by any of the writers of the New Testament applied to our Lord, there we are bound to explain the whole Psalm as prophetic of him. Nay, every Psalm, it has been contended, which may reasonably be held, even without express New Testament sanction, to be Messianic, is Messianic in all its parts, from first to last. For, it is urged, we are otherwise left without compass or star to guide us. Where, if this principle be abandoned, are we to draw the line, or what is to be the criterion of interpretation? Can we take one verse, and say, This applies to David; and another, and say, This applies to Christ? Does not our application of the Psalm thus become vague and arbitrary? Left without any standing rule or principle of interpretation, each can take or reject what he pleases.

But, in the first place, this canon of interpretation fails, because it, at least tacitly, assumes that in all these Psalms the writer is consciously uttering a prediction; that the Psalmist, although he is speaking, it may be, in some lower sense of himself, has ever consciously before

the eye of his mind One greater than he, in whom he knew that his words would find their ultimate fulfilment. But there is no proof that such is the case, but rather the reverse. In many Psalms it seems very evident that the writer is speaking of *himself*, of *his own* sufferings, of *his own* deliverance, apparently without thinking of another; although being a prophet, and therefore a type of Christ, he is led to use unconsciously words which, in their highest and truest sense, are applicable only to Christ.

In the next place, the difficulties involved in the canon of interpretation to which I refer are far more serious than those which it is intended to surmount. It compels us constantly to take words and phrases in a sense which is obviously not their proper and natural sense. We find in many of these Psalms, passages of which are said to have been fulfilled in the circumstances of our Lord's life or passion, confessions of sinfulness, maledictions of the writer's enemies, expressions of hatred and revenge, none of which can, in their plain, literal sense, be transferred to our Lord. It is therefore necessary, in order that the canon may hold in its application, to give to all such words and expressions a very modified and altered meaning; an expedient to which we surely ought not to resort, unless no other way of escape were open to us. The words of Scripture may have a far *deeper* meaning than that which lies on the surface, but surely not an altogether *different* meaning — a meaning which can only be extracted by ingenious contrivances, or by doing violence to the simplest rules of language. If, in order to maintain some rule of interpretation which we assume to be necessary, we are compelled to introduce words and thoughts into passages where those words are not found, it may be worth while to ask ourselves whether our rule itself is not bent and twisted, and fit only to be thrown away.

*The Fortieth Psalm.* — Let us test the rule, then, in one or two well-known instances. In the fortieth Psalm there occurs a passage, the Septuagint version of which is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The quotation runs thus: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." The citation is made in illustration of the writer's argument against the perpetuity of the Jewish sacrifices. He shows that those sacrifices were but a part of a law which was a shadow of good things to come, a law which confessed its own incompleteness, which contained the elements of its own dissolution,

which itself prophesied the destruction of its own body of death, and its resurrection to a life spiritual and eternal. He argues that the very *repetition* of those sacrifices is a proof of their incompleteness; and further, that the nature of the sacrifices was such, that they could have only a typical, not a moral efficacy. "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin," etc. With these he contrasts the offering of Christ, the great virtue of which lay in the fact, that it was the offering of an obedient will, and therefore essentially moral and spiritual in its character. And in order to express this truth in a forcible manner, and to put it in a light which for his readers would have an especial attraction, the writer of the Epistle claims the words of the Psalmist as having found their fulfilment in the mouth of Christ. The fact that the passage as cited by him from the version of the LXX differs in a material point from the Hebrew text, however interesting and instructive in itself, has no bearing on my present argument. What it is of importance to observe is, that those words quoted as having found their highest realization, their most perfect meaning, in the lips of our blessed Lord,<sup>1</sup> are followed by other words in the Psalm, which in their plain, grammatical sense cannot possibly be considered as spoken by him. For what follows this lofty expression of a ready obedience, of a will in harmony with the will of God? A sad confession of human sinfulness and misery. A cry for mercy, as from one who has sinned, and who has suffered for his sin. "Thou, O Jehovah, wilt not refrain thy tender compassions from me. . . . For evils have come about me without number; my iniquities have taken hold upon me that I cannot see: they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me." Then follow, further, a petition for help, and a prayer for confusion on his enemies. Now, how is this latter part of the Psalm made to apply to Christ? How, in particular, are the words in verse 12, "my iniquities," interpreted? That I may not be guilty of any exaggeration, I will quote Bishop Horsley's note on the passage: "*Aerumnæ meæ* [my distresses], says Houbigant; piously thinking that the person who speaks throughout the Psalm had no sins with which to charge himself. But since God 'laid upon him the iniquities of us,' therefore the Messiah, when he is personated in the Psalms, perpetually calls those iniquities his own, of which he bore the punishment."

But of the two explanations Houbigant's is the more tolerable. The

<sup>1</sup> This, I think, it may fairly be concluded, considering the general nature of the argument of the Epistle, is the writer's view, although it is not expressly said that the Scripture was fulfilled.



word rendered "my iniquities" might, in accordance with the opinion of competent scholars, be rendered "my punishments," the word being the same as in Gen. iv. 14, where our Authorized version has, "my punishment is heavier than I can bear." But even then, as punishment for personal guilt is meant, it is obvious that only by a remote and circuitous and tortuous method can the proposed application be made.

*Examination of Horsley's Interpretation.* — But as to Horsley's own interpretation, it is far more indefensible than that which it is intended to supersede. The passage which he quotes in support of his interpretation fails really in its most essential particulars. For that does express the very idea which here is not expressed, and which is only assumed, but not proved, to be implied. There we do not find "our iniquities" spoken of as the iniquities of Christ, but they are distinctly said, on the one hand, to be "the iniquities of us all," and as distinctly said on the other, to have been "*laid* upon him." Nor will similar passages which are sometimes appealed to in the New Testament bear the stress of the argument drawn from them. We are reminded, for instance, that our Lord is said "to bear our sins in his own body on the tree;" and that we even read that "God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us;" and it is contended that such language justifies the interpretation which Horsley has given of the Psalm. But I ask, is there no difference between these alleged parallel passages? Is not the difference, on the contrary, so great, that the one cannot be fairly explained by the other? Surely it is one thing for us to be told that God *made* Christ sin; and it is quite another thing for our blessed Lord himself to speak of the iniquities of others as his own. As a fact, he never does so. And the step in the argument is prodigious. The two ideas have scarcely an intelligible connection. The one expression seems even to exclude the other. A judge might condemn an innocent man to death in behalf of the guilty; but surely that innocent man would never speak of himself as guilty. Rather would he hold fast his integrity, as that which gave additional worth to his self-sacrifice.

*The Forty-first Psalm.* — Let us take one more instance, if possible still more strikingly conclusive against the mode of interpretation which I am impugning. It shall be taken from the next Psalm in the series, the forty-first. If this Psalm be the composition of David, there can be little doubt that he had in his mind the cruel desertion of some friend, perhaps Ahithophel, in the season of his extremity (2 Sam. xv. 31; xvi. 20, etc.) The words of the ninth verse, which so feelingly describes the bitterest drop in the cup of sorrow, the faithlessness of a known and trusted friend, are by our Lord himself applied to the

treachery of Judas.<sup>1</sup> But it is very instructive to observe the manner in which the quotation is made, especially where, as in this instance, it is introduced with the formula, "That the Scripture may be fulfilled." Our Lord drops from the quotation words which could not apply to himself: "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted;" for he never did trust Judas. He knew from the beginning who should betray him. It is clear, then, that we have our Lord's own authority for taking a portion, not only of a Psalm, but even of a particular passage in a Psalm, as prophetic of himself and the circumstances of his life. Indeed, in this Psalm the difficulties are absolutely appalling, if we try to expound it throughout of Christ. How, then, interpret the fourth verse: "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee;" or the tenth, "But thou, O Jehovah, be gracious unto me, and *raise me up that I may requite them*?" Horsley's note on the former verse is one of the most remarkable instances of a forced interpretation which it was ever my lot to meet with. He says: "In this Psalm the Messiah is the speaker, who in his own person was sinless. But the words may be rendered, 'Surely I bear blame before thee,' *Personam peccatoris apud te gero*. So the word חַטָּא is used, Gen. xliii. 9, of the A. V." Kennicott renders the sentence as a question, "Have I sinned against thee?" But Horsley was quite right in adding, "But I much doubt the use of the particle כִּי as an interrogative." It would be as reasonable to make ὅτι or γάρ an interrogative in Greek. To return, however, to Horsley's explanation, what meaning after all does it convey? What sense is there in saying, "Heal my soul, for I bear the blame before thee. Heal my soul, for I am not a sinner, but only in the character of a sinner?" Such interpretations *introduce* the idea which their authors think they find in a passage, and then the passage itself is said to contain the idea.

We need not carry this argument further. It is wonderful, indeed, that so arbitrary a canon of interpretation should have been invented, that it should have been maintained so perseveringly, and that its manifest defects should not have made its soundness suspected.

*Analogy of Prophecy.*— Besides these inherent difficulties, the canon has all analogy against it, as well as the authority of the New Testament writers. It has analogy against it; for no one thinks of expounding the prophetic books in this manner. Thus, no one contends that because part of a prophecy is Messianic, therefore every portion of it must be Messianic. No one, for instance, would argue that *the whole* of Isaiah's prophecy delivered to Ahaz, on the invasion of Rezin and

<sup>1</sup> Ἄλλ' ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ ὁ τρώγων μετ' ἐμοῦ τὸν ἄρτον ἐπὶ ἐμὲ τὴν πτέρναν αὐτοῦ. John xiii. 18.

Pekah, must be applied, down to its minutest details, to Christ, because St. Matthew leads us to see a fulfilment of one portion of his announcement, in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Why should we apply to the Psalms a rule which we do not apply to the prophets?

*Quotations in the New Testament.*—But in the next place, the invariable practice of the New Testament writers overthrows the canon referred to, and establishes for us a safe and consistent rule of interpretation. *Never does any writer of the New Testament, evangelist or apostle, never does our Lord himself, sanction the application of any passage of the Old Testament to him in which the writer confesses and deploras his own sinfulness.* This fact of itself ought to be a guide to us in our interpretation. It is a beacon against the shoals and quicksands of human error. Frequently and freely as the New Testament writers cite passages from the Old Testament, and especially from the Psalms,<sup>1</sup> as fulfilled in Christ—some, perhaps, which, without their authority, we should hardly have dared so to interpret—they most cautiously abstain from that perversion of language which in modern theology has been pushed to such an extreme. To them it would have seemed nothing short of an awful profanation to have spoken of the sins laid upon Christ as his sins. They would never have thought it possible to speak of him as a sinner, who to them was the Holy One of God. Words which expressed devotedness, self-sacrifice, high and holy aspirations, these they felt, and we all feel, however true in some sense of a righteous Israelite of old, uttering them in the communion of his heart with God, and carried beyond himself while he uttered them, were infinitely truer, yea, only true in the fullest sense, of him who came not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him. Hence these, even where no direct prediction was intended, were more fitting in his mouth than in theirs. So likewise the language of sorrow, the cry poured out from the depths of a troubled spirit, however truly expressive of the feelings of a pious Jew bowed down by calamities, persecutions, miseries untold, never came with so true a force of utterance from any lips as from the lips of him whose sorrows and whose sufferings were such as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.

*Typical Character of Messianic Prophecy in the Psalms.*—What, then, is the conclusion at which we arrive from these observed facts? Surely it is this: that the Psalms to a large extent foreshadow Christ,

<sup>1</sup> It is a remarkable fact, that of all the citations in the New Testament, from the Old, which have a Messianic reference, nearly one-half is made from the Psalms.

because the writers of the Psalms are types of Christ. And it is of the very nature of a type to be imperfect. It foretells in some particulars, but not in all, that of which it is the type. Were it complete in itself, it would not point further; through its very incompleteness it becomes a prophecy. Now, the Psalms are typical. They are the words of holy men of old — of one especially, whose life was fashioned in many of its prominent features to be a type of Christ. But just as David's *whole* life was not typical of Christ, so neither were all his words. His suffering and his humiliation first, and his glory afterwards, were faint and passing and evanescent images of the life of him who was both Son of David and Son of God. But the sorrowful shadow of pollution which passed upon David's life, that was not typical, and, therefore, the words in which it was confessed are not typical or predictive, or capable of application to our Lord. Once let us firmly grasp this idea, that any Psalm in which a suffering saint of God under the Old Testament addresses God has but a typical reference to Christ, where it has any such reference at all, and we are freed at once from all embarrassment of interpretation. Then we can say without hesitation: Every word in that Psalm is the true expression of the feelings of him who wrote it; the suffering is a real suffering; the sorrow is a real sorrow; the aspiration, so high, so heavenly, is a real aspiration; the joy and the triumph of deliverance are real; the confession of sin comes from a heart to which sin is a real burden. But the sorrow, the suffering, the aspiration, the joy, the triumph — all but the sin — never found all their fulness of meaning save in the life and on the lips of the Perfect Man.

*In accordance with the Character of Jewish History.* — Another great advantage of this system of interpretation is, that it not only saves us from a forced and unnatural interpretation of language in particular instances, but that it falls in so completely with the whole history of the Old Testament. That history is throughout typical. We have the key to its meaning in that quotation by the evangelist Matthew: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." The history of Israel and the history of Christ are, in a certain sense, one. And as the history of Israel was fashioned to be typical of the history of redemption, in its capital features, so the history of the great representative characters in Israel was designed to foreshadow, each in some distinct particular, the life of Christ. Christ our Lord is prophet, priest, and king. All these offices find their highest significance in him; and, accordingly, those who bore these offices in the Mosaic economy were, in their several degrees, types of Christ.



*The Prophet.* — 1. The prophet was the teacher of the truth which he had received by solemn commission from the mouth of God. He came to the people, as one sent by God, bearing the message of God on his lips. He spake of truth, of righteousness, of mercy; he revealed God's will, he threatened God's judgments; he rebuked the prevalent formalism and the prevalent hypocrisy. He was the majestic witness for God against the priest whose lips no longer kept knowledge, against the king who forgot that he was the servant of the Highest, and against the people who clung to the letter of the law with the more scrupulous tenacity, in proportion as they forgot and departed from its spirit. But the prophet himself did not speak *all* the truth. He often spoke dimly; he revealed only those portions and fragments of truth which it was his especial mission to proclaim. Such was the prophet in his teaching. But what was he in his life? He went in and out before the people, and he was one with them. He was better, for the most part, than those whom he rebuked; but there were blots and imperfections in his life. Sin, and error, and infirmity might be seen even in the teacher sent from God. The true Prophet had not yet come. God gave his people the type, but with his own hand he brake it in pieces before their eyes, that they might wait for the Great Prophet of his church, for him who should not only teach the truth, but be the Truth; for him who should not only speak the word, but be the Word; the only-begotten Son, who, alike in life and speech, should declare the Father unto men.

2. *The Priest.* — So likewise was it with the priest. The Jewish high-priest was the intercessor between man and God. As the prophet was the messenger from God to man, so the priest was the representative of man with God. He was taken from among men. Once in the year he entered into the most holy place, there to make atonement for sin. But that holy place itself was typical and shadowy; it was but the figure of heaven. The victim whose blood was there sprinkled to make atonement, showed that that earthly sanctuary needed itself to be cleansed. The blood was the blood of a dumb animal, which could never take away sin. The high-priest confessed his own imperfection in the very act of atonement, because he must offer sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. The priest, therefore, though a representative of the people, was an imperfect representative, entering into an imperfect sanctuary, offering an imperfect sacrifice. God gave his people the type, but he brake in pieces the type before their eyes, and thus he led them to look for the true Priest — for him who should make atonement with his own blood, and for ever put away

sin by the sacrifice of himself; whose sympathy would be perfect, because he could bear all hearts in his; whose sacrifice would be perfect, because it was the sacrifice of himself; whose intercession would be all-prevalent, because he ever liveth at the right hand of God.

3. *The King*. — There was another prominent character in the Jewish theocracy. The king was emphatically the anointed of God; his vicergerent upon earth. He was to be the witness for a divine government, the pattern of the divine righteousness, filled with the spirit of wisdom and understanding. "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son." Such was the prayer uttered, perhaps, by Solomon, and conveying in its expression the true conception of what a king should be, as ruling by the grace of God, and, in some sort, even representing God to man. God made a covenant with David, gave him promises great and glorious, seated his son upon his throne. But that son disappointed all the hopes which once gathered around him so brightly. The morning of his reign which was so fair, like a morning without clouds, was quickly overcast, and his sun set in the disastrous gloom of a gathering tempest. He who had been the mirror of justice and wisdom ended by cruelly oppressing his subjects. Too surely and too lamentably was it made evident that he was not the righteous king whose rule was to be a blessing to the world. He was not the defender of the poor and the scourge of evil-doers; his dominion was not from sea to sea, nor from the river to the ends of the earth. After him the sceptre which he had held was broken in twain. And as one after another of his descendants sat upon David's throne, the earthly hope waxed fainter and fainter. If for a moment it revived with the pious Hezekiah, with the good Josiah, it was but to sink at last into a deeper darkness. Wrong and violence were in the city; and none sat in the gate to do justice. The poor cried, but he had no helper; the oppressed, and there was none to deliver. The king was stained with crimes, and used the almost despotic power of an oriental prince unscrupulously and without remorse. The fair image of righteousness, associated with the very name of king, and of which the bright ideal had never been conceived as it was in Judaism, where was it to be found? The true Son of David was not yet come. Men's hearts and eyes failed them for longing and looking for his coming. God took the earthly type and brake it in pieces before their eyes, that they might thus wait for him who should be King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

*Two only of these Figures appear in the Psalms*. — Of these three principal figures in the Jewish typical system, two appear prominently

in the Psalms, the prophet and the king. This is what might be expected. The priest was typical by his acts rather than by his words. And sacrifice and ritual might be enjoined and described in the law, but they find no place in the Psalms. They are mentioned only to be depreciated. Hence in one Psalm only does Messiah appear as priest, and there he is both king and priest. There, moreover, he stands as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and not after the order of Aaron. But with regard to the other two offices — those of prophet and king — the Messianic Psalms may be divided into two classes, according as they are represented by the one or the other of these two characters.

1. *Prediction of the Messiah as King.* — We have a series of Psalms — the second, the twentieth, the twenty-first, the forty-fifth, the seventy-second, the hundred and tenth — in all of which a king is celebrated. In one Psalm a king is described who goes forth conquering and to conquer; in another, a king whose reign is a reign of righteousness and peace. In another, the occasion of the royal nuptials has been selected as the subject. In all, some Jewish monarch, either on his accession, or at some critical period of his reign, is the immediate object before the eyes of the inspired poet. But in all the monarch grows larger and fairer than the sons of men. He is seen ever in the light of the promise made to David, and in that light he is transfigured. Human he is, no doubt: many words spoken of him pertain only to a human king; but many also are higher; many cannot, except by force of exaggeration, be made to apply to one who wears the frailty together with the form of man. There is but one interpretation by which the apparently discordant elements in these Psalms can be held together. It is that according to which the Psalms are regarded not as simply predictive, but as properly typical in their character.

2. *As Prophet and Sufferer.* — Many other Psalms there are which, in the New Testament, are said to have their fulfilment in the sufferings of Christ. In these, again, the writer himself is a type of Christ, and he is so in his character as a prophet, or preacher of righteousness. In all these Psalms a servant of God appears as a sufferer, and a sufferer for righteousness' sake; often, indeed, confessing that he suffers the just punishment of his sins *at the hands of God*, but always complaining that he is unjustly persecuted *of men*. In such Psalms, more particularly, as the twenty-second and sixty-ninth we find, moreover, language used which implies that the sufferer occupies a prominent position, and that he is, in some sense, the representative of Israel in his sufferings. The issue of those sufferings is to be a subject of joy and thanksgiving, not to himself only, but to all who, like himself, fear God, and endure

persecution for his name's sake. Hence the Psalmist, both as prophet and as righteous sufferer, is a type of Christ; for every Jewish prophet or preacher was also conspicuous as a sufferer, a martyr for the truth.

*These two not united in the Psalms.*—But we never find these two characters—that of the suffering prophet and the victorious king—united in the same Psalm. This, of itself, is surely remarkable. This, of itself, teaches us how purely typical the Psalms are, so far as their Messianic import is concerned. Everywhere we find imperfection; everywhere only a partial representation of that which could not as yet be conceived of in its completeness.

Lastly, there is another remarkable circumstance, which lends ample confirmation, were confirmation needed, to the view I have advocated. It is this. Nowhere in the Psalms are the redemption of the world and Israel's final glory bound up with the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah is, for a time at least, associated with the present, and only with the present. The anointed of God is David, or Solomon, till both the one and the other fail to fulfil the longings of men's hearts. But the advent to which Israel looks forward is the advent of *JEHOVAH*. It is he who is Israel's true King. It is his coming which shall be her redemption and her glory; but his coming is never identified with the coming of the Messiah."<sup>1</sup> The earthly hope and the heavenly run on in parallel lines, but they never meet. In the light of the New Testament only do we see how David's Son is also his Lord.

All these facts, then, point in one direction. The fact that the Messiah and the Divine Deliverer are not as yet seen by the Psalmists to be the same; the fact that the king and the sufferer are two, not one; the fact that the New Testament writers never quote confessions of sinfulness as in any way applicable to Christ, whilst they do quote other words expressive of devotion or suffering as so applicable—all these tend to the same conclusion, namely, that whilst all the great characters of Israelitish history are typical of him, they are so only partially and imperfectly. Hence we can freely and safely adopt this principle of interpretation in all cases. We can see in every Psalm which may reasonably be regarded as Messianic, a primary reference to the writer and to his own circumstances; and, so far as confessions of sin meet us, an exclusive reference; whereas in all else, without maintaining a conscious prophecy, we can recognize the language of a type waiting its proper accomplishment in the antitype.

<sup>1</sup> See this beautifully stated by Delitzsch, in the note which I have quoted on Psalm lxxii.



II. *Relation of the Psalmists to the Law.*—We turn now to the relation in which the Psalmists stand to the law of God. And here we may notice, first, the strong affection expressed for the law of God in itself, and, next, the remarkable recognition of its higher and more spiritual requirements, as contrasted with its merely ceremonial enactments.

1. We have, first, the expression of a strong personal affection for the law of God. “The law of Jehovah,” it is said in the nineteenth Psalm, “is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes. . . . The judgments of Jehovah are truth, they are righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the droppings of the honeycomb. Moreover thy servant is enlightened by them, (and) in keeping of them there is great reward.” In the first Psalm, where the character of the righteous man is portrayed in contrast with that of the wicked, it is summed up in these words: “In the law of Jehovah is his delight, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” The longest Psalm in the whole collection, the hundred and nineteenth, might be entitled “The praise of the law;” for it sets forth in ceaseless variety of application the value of the law, the statutes, the judgments of God. What, then, was this law, which seemed so precious, so infinitely beyond all gold and silver, to the Psalmists of Israel, which was to them as a light to their feet, and as sweet food to their mouth, and which was their meditation all the day? Is it the same law which to St. Paul seems so bitter, which he views as the strength of sin, as making him feel his wretchedness, as pronouncing his condemnation? Calvin has thrown out the question in his Commentary on the nineteenth Psalm, and has partly answered it. “How,” he asks, “shall these things agree, that the law restores the soul, and yet is a dead letter; that it cheers the heart, and yet brings with it the spirit of a slave and inspires us with terror; that it enlightens the eyes, and yet, by putting a veil before them, darkens the light within?” “St. Paul,” he replies, “and the Psalmist are regarding the law from two different points of view. David does not speak of the law as opposed to the gospel, but of the law as including the promise. To him the law is not merely the code, the bare precepts, but the whole revelation of God, so far as it was then given, including Christ himself, on whom the adoption of Israel rested. St. Paul, on the other hand, had to do with perverse interpreters of the law, who were for separating it from the grace and spirit

of Christ; whereas, apart from Christ, the law, inexorable in its requirements, can only expose the whole world to God's wrath and curse." This, no doubt, is true so far as it goes. St. Paul was looking at the law merely as a covenant of works: "The man that doeth these things, he shall live by them;" and he felt deeply his own inability to live by them. He saw, on the one hand, the holiness of God reflected in the law, and, on the other hand, the impossibility of keeping the law. The impossibility of keeping it filled him with terror and dismay; but, so far as it was the reflection of God's holiness, he could say, as truly as David, "I *delight* in the law of God after the inner man." He too could say, "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good." Viewed in itself, viewed as an expression of the mind of God, it was all that the Psalmist declared it to be. It was only when it was looked at as an instrument of justification that it became clothed with terror. When a man heard that in order to be saved he must obey the law, and when conscience told him that he was a perpetual transgressor of the law, then, indeed, he saw nothing but condemnation. But this relation to the law, so distinctly felt, so clearly understood, is peculiar to the gospel. The work of the Spirit of Christ has given us, it cannot be doubted, a deeper insight into the nature of sin, and therefore, also, into the condemning power of the law. But, under the Old Testament, the opposition between the law and sin does not appear with anything like the same sharpness of outline. The love and affection which are expressed towards the law here are expressed towards it regarded simply as the reflection of the pure and perfect and holy will of God. To the spiritually-minded Jew under the Old Testament, that law was not merely an outward letter of restraint; his heart and conscience consented thereto.<sup>1</sup> And one capital object of the teaching of the prophets was to represent it in its truly spiritual meaning, and so to set forth as a proper object of affection to every heart which waited upon God.

2. *Spiritual Appreciation of the Ceremonial Part of the Law.*—But, again, we find in the Psalms a thoroughly spiritual appreciation of the

<sup>1</sup> Luther, in commenting on those words of the First Psalm, "His delight (or, as he renders it, *will*) is in the law of Jehovah," beautifully observes: "Now this will is that pure satisfaction of the heart, and, so to speak, pleasure in the law, which does not ask what the law promises, or what it threatens, but only this, that the law is holy, just, and good. It is, therefore, not only a love of the law, but a loving delight in the law, which neither by any prosperity nor by any adversity can the world and the prince of the world take away or overcome, but through the midst of want, infamy, the cross, death, hell, it forces its victorious way; for it shines forth chiefly in adversities."

ceremonial part of the law. Samuel had already led the way here. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The same truth in one Psalm (the fortieth) is represented as having been immediately communicated by divine teaching to the writer of the Psalm. David may both have learnt it from Samuel, when he was living among "the sons of prophets," and have had the lesson confirmed by the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost. "Burnt-offering and sacrifice," he declares, "thou wouldest not. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." In the grand prophetic strain of the fiftieth Psalm, the relation of sacrifice to obedience is no less explicitly taught — the comparative worthlessness of the one, the real value of the other. It is of importance to bear in mind, that this, and this only, is the view taken of the Mosaic sacrifices by the spiritually enlightened Jew under that dispensation. He evidently did not regard those sacrifices, as so many Christian writers have regarded them, as having, in the case of those who offered them in penitence and faith, a spiritual efficacy. Their only efficacy to him was the efficacy which the law itself assigned to them; they were the instruments of restoring him, when he had transgressed, to his place as a member of the theocracy, a citizen of the visible kingdom of God. But they did not confer, or convey, *the remission of sins*. They were external, and their efficacy was external. They were *typical*, no doubt, of Christ's sacrifice; and the forgiveness which they procured, and which resulted in the re-admission of an offender to the privileges of his Jewish citizenship, was typical of the forgiveness of sins under the gospel dispensation. But it is no less certain that the legal sacrifices did not take the place in the Old Testament of the sacrifice of Christ in the New, that it was not *through his sacrifices* that the Old Testament believer looked for the forgiveness of his sins. Had it been so, we could not have found the constant opposition between sacrifice and obedience, the studied depreciation of sacrifices, which meets us everywhere in the Psalms and the prophets, and which is, in fact, fully confirmed by the whole argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. How far the Jewish believer saw into the typical meaning of his sacrifices, is a question which cannot now be answered. It is, however, somewhat remarkable that the prophets, earnestly as they expostulate with the people on the subject of their sacrifices, never say one word on this aspect of them, never speak of this their hidden meaning. But the typical meaning and the real efficacy are two very different things. In truth, as has been ably argued,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the clear and satisfactory statement of the whole question in Mr. M'Donnell's *Donnellan Lectures*. Appendix to the First Sermon.

if we assign to the type the virtue of the antitype, if we make the remission of sins procured by the one co-extensive with the remission of sins procured by the other, we destroy the type altogether. The sacrifice had no moral value. Hence the Psalmist says, *not* sacrifice, *but* a broken heart. Could he have said this, if through the sacrifice he looked for forgiveness of sin?

III. *Assertions of Innocence in the Psalms.* — We find in the Psalms, on many occasions, assertions of uprightness, of innocence, of freedom from transgression, which almost startle us. Such expressions, indeed, have sometimes given offence, as if they savored of a self-righteous spirit. But a little reflection will show how mistaken such a notion is. We have but to turn to the passage in which they occur, to see at once that the words are not the words of a proud boaster, ignorant alike of his own heart and of the law of God. Take, for instance, such passages as these: "Thou hast proved my heart; thou hast visited (me) by night; thou hast tried (me) and findest no evil thought in me; neither does my heart transgress" (Ps. xvii. 3). The words are bold words, no doubt. Such an assertion of innocence is one which we might tremble to make. But it is not self-righteous. It is not the utterance of the Pharisee, "God, I thank thee I am not as other men are, or even as this publican." It is made solemnly in the presence of God, with a direct appeal to him as knowing the heart: "From thy presence let my judgment go forth; thine eyes behold uprightness" (ver. 2). It is fully explained by other language immediately preceding: "Give ear to my prayer which (is uttered) *by no deceitful lips.*" These last words show us the sense in which such a passage is to be taken. The Psalmist is not asserting his freedom from sin, but the uprightness and guilelessness of his heart towards God. He is no hypocrite, no dissembler; he is *not consciously* doing wrong.

Language equally strong, or stronger, we find again in the next Psalm: "Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands did he recompense me. For I have kept the ways of Jehovah, and have not wickedly departed from my God. . . . I have also been perfect with him, and have kept myself from my iniquity." Such words are, no doubt, enough to make us pause and look within, and ask ourselves if we can utter them in sincerity, but they are manifestly not said in a boastful, arrogant spirit. The whole Psalm is full of a childlike trust and confidence in God; the very opposite of the spirit of self-righteousness. It may be, perhaps, that we meet with such expressions more frequently in the Psalms than we do in the New Testament, because the sense of sin under the



old dispensation was not so deep as under the new. That it was not, and could not be, the New Testament itself teaches us. The law was given to restrain outward acts, but it could not touch the conscience. There were foreshadowings of the sacrifice of Christ, but that sacrifice had not been offered. And, therefore, as all the meaning of that atonement could not be understood, so neither could all the depth and malignity of sin be discovered. The Spirit of God, though he undoubtedly was the source of all righteousness then, as now, in the hearts of believers, yet did not, it is plain, exercise the same influence as he does in the present dispensation. We are distinctly taught that, till the ascension of Christ, "the Holy Ghost was not given." That gift, it is intimated, was in some special sense the great glory and privilege of the Christian church. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Nor was the distinguishing feature of his mission the imparting only of extraordinary miraculous gifts. In his other operations, also, he works now as he did not then. Coming as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, it is his office, in a sense before unknown, because connected immediately with the work of Christ and his going to the Father, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. All, therefore, that was taught under the legal economy on these subjects, though true, because taught by the same Spirit, yet was nevertheless comparatively imperfect, because he had not yet come as sent by the risen Saviour.

Still, while we admit this, because the whole tenor and scope of God's revelation compel us to admit it, we must not forget how true, how real, how widely different from anything to be met with elsewhere in the ancient world, is the sense of sin expressed in the Psalms. It may be, no doubt, and it often is, first awakened by suffering. The sharpness of the rod seems the measure of the transgression. It may be that more frequently acts of sin are regarded than the bitter root whence these spring—the sinful nature. So far as this is the case, we may allow that such representations are in accordance rather with the Old Testament than with the New. But even granting this, we have still the truest view of sin before us in the Psalms. We do find there (in the fifty-first Psalm) the confession of a *sinful nature*, as well as of sinful acts. We find the confession that all sin, as sin, is committed against God, even when the act is done against our neighbor. We find the ever-living consciousness that God looks at the heart, and not merely at the outward act. "The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." We find the blessedness of forgiveness stated in words which the Apostle

Paul cites in his Epistle to the Romans, when asserting the doctrine of justification by faith. We find the need, and the longing for sanctification through the Spirit, plainly and feelingly declared.

IV. *Imprecations in the Psalms.*—One other point, bearing upon the moral position of the Psalmists, remains to be considered, and it is, perhaps, that which has occasioned more real perplexity than any other. We find in some of the Psalms terrible denunciations of the writer's enemies, withering anathemas, imprecations so awful that we almost tremble to read them. How are we to explain the occurrence of such prayers for vengeance? Are they justifiable? Are they, not the mere outburst of passionate and unsanctified feeling, but the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Or are they Jewish only, and not Christian? And if so, then how are we to reconcile this with a belief in the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures? Such language is certainly very different from anything that we meet with in the New Testament; and yet, if it is not legitimate, if we may not use it ourselves, then how can it be said to be given by inspiration of God?

This is a real difficulty, and it seemed so real a difficulty even to a mind like that of Arnold, that he took refuge in what must be called a non-natural interpretation, and argued that such language could be lawfully used now, only with reference to the enemies of our soul's peace. Yet it is obvious how impossible it is to carry out this principle of interpretation. How, for instance, in wrestling with spiritual enemies, could we adopt with any definite meaning such words as these: "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged let him be condemned; and let his prayers become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow," etc. It is manifestly out of the question: the gulf is too wide between the original sense and the attempted application.

I have so fully explained, in a note on the thirty-fifth Psalm, what I believe to be the right principle of interpretation in passages of this imprecatory character, that I need not go over the ground again. I will only make two remarks. First, let the English reader be on his guard against the well-meant assertions of Bishop Horne and other writers, that the verbs which are correctly rendered in our authorized version as optatives might, with equal propriety, be rendered as futures. This method of translation would escape from the difficulty by giving us predictions for imprecations. Thus, for instance, instead of reading: "*Let* his days be few: *let* his children be fatherless," etc., these expositors would have us read: "His days *shall* be few; his children *shall*

be fatherless," etc. But this is an expedient which does violence to the most certain rules of language. The tense in Hebrew which by the older grammarians is commonly called the future, and, by the more recent, either the present or imperfect, but which I venture to think ought to be called the aorist, has two forms. One of these is used to denote sometimes present, sometimes past, sometimes future action. The other, an apocopated or shortened form, is used to denote the expression of a wish.<sup>1</sup> It is this last which occurs in all the passages where the English version has employed, and rightly employed, the auxiliary verb "let" as an equivalent. This, then, is certain: we have in the Psalms imprecations, prayers for vengeance, and not merely the threatening of God's wrath against impenitent sinners. The verbs are optatives, not futures.

My next remark is designed to meet, if possible, a misrepresentation of my meaning in what I have said in the note before referred to. I have there endeavored to show that, whilst we need not suppose that the indignation which burns so hotly is other than a righteous indignation, yet that we are to regard it as permitted under the Old Testament rather than justifiable under the New. Surely there is nothing in such an explanation which in the smallest degree impugns the divine authority of the earlier Scriptures. In how many respects have the harsher outlines of the legal economy been softened down by "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." How much of it is declared to be antiquated, even though it still stands for our instruction in the volume of the Bible. How clearly our Lord himself teaches us, that his Spirit and the spirit of Elijah are not the same. Yet surely no prophet of the Old Testament occupies a higher place, as an inspired messenger of God, than the prophet Elijah. Our Lord does not condemn the prophet for his righteous zeal: he does forbid the manifestation of a like zeal on the part of his disciples. As in the Sermon on the Mount he substitutes the moral principle for the legal enactment, so here he substitutes the spirit of gentleness, meekness, endurance of wrongs, for the spirit of fiery though righteous indignation. The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, but it is inferior to it.

And there is a peculiarity in the circumstances under which our Lord's remarks were uttered when he forbade his disciples to call down

<sup>1</sup> In order to make this clear to a person ignorant of Hebrew, I will attempt an illustration from the Latin. *Amabit*, "he will love," is the third person future of *amo*; now suppose that instead of employing a distinct form, as the Latin language does, to express "let him love," it were to convey this optative meaning by contracting the future *amabit* into *ambt*, such a process would, as nearly as possible, represent what takes place in Hebrew.

fire from heaven upon the Samaritan village, which makes his remarks on that occasion strictly applicable to the question we are discussing. The disciples, it is plain, were not actuated by selfish or interested motives. It was not their own quarrel, but their Master's, in which they were engaged. The insult had been offered to him, and therefore they would have avenged him as Peter did when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus. Their indignation was righteous, as Elijah's indignation was righteous. But because they were disciples of the gospel of peace, not the stern soldiers of an exclusive and peremptory law, the zealous work of vengeance was forbidden them. Surely, then, we are justified in saying that the imprecations in the Psalms, though springing from a righteous zeal for the glory of God, and not from any mere thirst of personal revenge, still are not such as a Christian can lawfully, in their natural sense, use now. They may have their lesson for us, nevertheless. They may show us what zeal for God is; how it consumes one who is truly filled by it. They may be a warning against laxity of belief, indifference, softness of spirit, even whilst we know that our zeal is to be a zeal of love, not of hate; our fervor, a fervor of devotion to God rather than of opposition even to those whom we may count to be his enemies. The imprecations which may not pass over our lips, where one of our own enemies, or even one of God's enemies, is concerned, may still remind us that there is a holy jealousy of love, may rouse us to greater moral earnestness, may rebuke us, and put us to shame because we are neither cold nor hot. Such words of Scripture may be profitable for reproof, if they are not profitable for doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

V. *Hope of a Future Life.*—Before we quit the general subject of the Theology of the Psalms, one other topic requires a few words of notice. I have touched upon it frequently in the notes; but an allusion to it here will not be out of place. What do we gather from the Psalms with respect to a future life? Does the hope of that life, and of the resurrection of the dead, occupy any prominent place among those motives by which the saint of God strives to sustain his faith amidst the wrong-doing which he sees in the world, the persecutions to which he is exposed, the sorrows and the sufferings which lay so heavily upon him? Very rarely indeed is this motive appealed to; still more rarely is it made a ground of consolation in the midst of suffering. Some half-dozen passages in the Psalms are all that can be pointed out, where the bright hope of everlasting life casts its light upon the

<sup>1</sup> See Coleridge's *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, Letter iii., and Dean Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Lecture xi. p. 249, etc.



present. In this, as in all things else, God's revelation was gradual. At no time could they who trusted in God and loved him dream that their trust and love were only for this world. But in the life of Abraham, nothing is said of his hope after death. In the life of Moses it is the same. With David the hope begins to assert itself; it is not, indeed, clear; it speaks in no certain accents; but still it wears the aspect, and utters the voice, of a hope. It is a hope of that which *may* be, rather than of that which *shall* be; but yet, even in its weakness, it tramples upon the world and time and death. With Isaiah this hope becomes clearer. Ezekiel, in the parable of a national resurrection, draws his image from the resurrection of the dead. Daniel asserts it in language which cannot be mistaken. From this time onward it becomes an undoubted article of Jewish belief. They who deny it are counted for a sect, and our Lord confutes them with an unanswerable argument drawn from the books of Moses. Finally, by his resurrection, life and immortality were brought to light; and from the days of the apostles to the present hour, Jesus and the resurrection have been the prominent subjects of all Christianity, and a future life the most consoling hope in all times of affliction, and in the presence of death. But it was otherwise with the fathers of the Jewish church. God was teaching them the capital truth on which all other truth was to rest, that he, and nothing else, was their sufficient portion. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," this was his great word to Abraham. It was by this that Abraham lived. All else was promise; this was present possession. The promised land he could never call his own; the promised seed was given to him only to be demanded back by him who gave it. The whole discipline of Abraham's life had this purpose in it; to lead him to find the everlasting God, his strength, his portion, his all. He was called "the friend of God;" and he who had God for his friend could need, could have, nothing more; for all was implied in this. On this fact Abraham's life was built; on this the lives of all his true children. The Jews were not merely designed to be witnesses to the world of the unity of God. They were this, no doubt; but they were far more. They were witnesses to a better truth,—that the eternal God loves men, and calls them his children and his friends, and that men can be, and know themselves to be, his friends and his children. It is of this truth that the Psalms are full. They give proof in every verse of the reality of a communion and fellowship between the living God and his creatures. The poetry of the Hebrews, it has been well said, is a "poetry of friendship between God and man."<sup>1</sup> And it seems

<sup>1</sup> "Eine Freundschaftspoesie der Menschen mit Gott sollte sie seyn; eine Kindes-

to have been designed that the truth of this divine communion should occupy so commanding a position, that no other truth should be suffered, as it were, to come into competition with it.<sup>1</sup> This was to stand alone in its grandeur, because it is upon this that man's life must be built. We must rest upon the broad foundation of faith before we can have the hope which maketh not ashamed. If hope is the anchor within the veil, faith is the victory which overcometh the world. We cannot wonder, therefore, that so little, comparatively, is said of a future life in the Psalms. It was not yet time. God was training his children to lean only upon him. When the fulness of the time was come, the veil was rent away, paradise opened, and the church militant made one with the church triumphant.<sup>2</sup>

*Nature of Differences between the Old Testament and the New.*—I have thus endeavored to trace some of those differences between the Old Testament and the New, which meet us in the Psalms; and which meet us peculiarly there, because there, more than anywhere else, we can see what the life of the saints, their true life, was towards God. Such an attempt must be made carefully, lest we either exaggerate differences on the one side, or fail to see them on the other. That there are differences, our Lord himself has taught us. In his Sermon on the Mount, and in the discourse with his disciples before referred to, he has distinctly recognized them. It is for us to strive to see them in his light, not according to our own prepossessions. We read the Old Testament now with our Christian illumination; we read it, therefore, in a Christian sense; we cannot help doing so. But we should also remember, that that sense is not the sense which it once possessed; but one which has superseded, or softened, or transfigured the other. We must not attribute to them of old time a knowledge and an insight which they did not possess, even whilst we thankfully use their words as the best expression of our own Christian faith and hope and love.

Let me venture here to add a comparison by which I have sometimes endeavored to illustrate to my own mind the difference between the old covenant and the new. They who belonged to the former were like men living in a valley, above whose heads hung heavy masses of

poesie schwacher Menschen vom väterlichen höchsten Wesen, die sich an seinen Bund erinnern, auf sein gegebenes Wort beziehen, und ihr Herz durch Thaten Gottes stärken."—Herder, *Sämmtl. Werke*, i. 213.

<sup>1</sup> See Dean Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Lect. vii. p. 154, and Mr. Isaac Taylor's admirable work, *The Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, where this abstinence from the theme of a future life is strikingly brought out.

<sup>2</sup> I have discussed this whole question more fully in my *Hulsean Lectures on Immortality*, Lect. iii.

vapor, hiding from them the mountain peaks which rose near, and the light resting on their summits. Now and then, through a sudden rift in the vapor, there stole a ray of light, and lingered for a moment on some favored spot in the valley beneath. Now and then some one dwelling in that favored spot, and endowed with a keener sight than the rest, followed that ray of light till his eye rested upon the mountain summit. It was but for a moment that he was permitted to see such things, yet it was long enough to make him rejoice in hope; long enough to make him a preacher to others of what he had himself been privileged to see. We, on the other hand, stand on the mountain-top on which the sun has risen, on which the full light now shineth. The vapors which once hid the valley are rolled away. To us the whole landscape is disclosed. We see, therefore, not the mountain only, but the valley. We see it far more truly than those who dwelt in it; for we see, not a part only, but the whole. We see it, not by means of a partial illumination only, mist and light struggling and confused, but all unveiled in its cloudless splendor. We see both mountain and valley radiant with a divine glory, bright with the everlasting sunshine of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE POSITION, NAMES, DIVISION, AND PROBABLE ORIGIN AND FORMATION OF THE PSALTER.

I. *Place of the Psalms in the Bible.*—The Psalter is a part of the third great division of the Hebrew Bible, which is styled the K'thubhim, or Hagiographa. In this division it has commonly occupied the first place, and hence we find the whole of the Old Testament summed up under the three names of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.<sup>1</sup> This order, however, has not been uniformly followed. It is observed in the German mss. and in most printed editions, where the several books stand as follow: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and then the five Megilloth, as they are called, viz. the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther. But the Masora and the Spanish mss. arrange differently: Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, the Megilloth, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah; the intention being, no doubt, thus to bring the Books of Chronicles into immediate juxtaposition with the Books of Kings, but with the obvious disadvantage of separating Chronicles from Ezra and Nehemiah. According to the Talmud the order is: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs; the Book of Ruth being prefixed as a kind of prologue to the Psalms, because David was descended from Ruth. But the natural order is that which places the Psalms first, as representing, in a considerable portion of it, the age of David; and then Proverbs and Job, as representing the age of Solomon.

II. *Names of the Psalms.*—The Psalms are called, in our Hebrew Bibles, by the general name of תְּהִלִּים (*T'hillim*), "Praises, Songs of Praise," or סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים, "Book of Praises;" frequently written in a shorter form, תְּהִלִּים (or with the Aramaic termination תְּהִלִּין), or even still further abbreviated, by rejection of the final *Mem*, into תְּהִל (Tilli).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus attempts to express the title in Greek letters: Ἑβραῖοι περιέγραψαν τὴν βίβλον Σέφρα Θελείμ, and Jerome in Latin (in the Preface to his translation juxta Hebraicam Veritatem): "Et titulus ipse Hebraicus *Sephar Thallim*, quod interpretatur volumen hymnorum Apostolicae auctoritati congruens non plures libros, sed unum volumen ostendit." In later Jewish writings, the feminine form, תְּהִלִּית, occurs.



It is remarkable, however, that only one single Psalm, the one hundred and forty-fifth, is styled a *T'hillah*, or "Song of Praise," in its inscription; and as most of the Psalms are not, strictly speaking, hymns, but rather of an elegiac or didactic character, it has been thought surprising that they should be styled collectively "Songs of Praise." DeWette, indeed, objects to the title, as not representing sufficiently the general character of the book; but a more suitable one could, perhaps, hardly be found; for thanksgiving is the very life of the Psalms, even of those in which there breathes most the language of complaint. "To the glory of God" might stand as the inscription of each. The narrative Psalms praise, whilst they record his mighty deeds; the didactic Psalms declare his goodness as worthy of grateful acknowledgement; the Psalms of sorrow are turned into songs of joy, in the recollection or anticipation of his saving help. "The verb תִּלְלֵהָ,"<sup>1</sup> says Delitzsch, "includes both the *Magnificat* and the *De Profundis*."

Another name, given, however, not to the whole Psalter, but only to a portion of it, is תְּפִלּוֹת (*T'philloth*), "Prayers." At the end of the seventy-second Psalm there is appended a notice which is designed, as some have supposed, to apply to the second book, but which more probably applies to the whole collection ranging from Psalm i. to Psalm lxxii., "The *prayers* of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." Here, as in the former instance, the name is not borrowed from the inscriptions of the Psalms, for only one in that collection, namely, the seventeenth, is expressly styled "a prayer." In the later books a few other Psalms are entitled "Prayers;" such are Psalms lxxxvi., xc., cii. cxlii. But here, again, the title, as a general title, is justified by the contents of most of the Psalms. Psalms, it is true, like the first, the second, the thirty-third, the thirty-seventh, contain no address to God, and many others, which contain petitions and supplications, are not throughout in the form of prayers. And yet, if prayer be the eye of the heart turned towards God, then each Psalm is a prayer, just as Hannah's song of praise is styled a prayer. "And Hannah *prayed*, and said," etc. Thus the very names of the Psalms, "Praises and Prayers," not only tell us what they are, but remind us in the language of the apostle, "In everything, by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, to make known our requests unto God."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "To praise;" retained in the English, Halleluia.

<sup>2</sup> The Masora styles the Psalter, תְּפִלָּה, Hallêla. In Syriac it is called *ketob demazmûre*; in the Koran *zabûr*; this last meaning in Arabic nothing more than "writing," or "scripture," though Delitzsch conjectures it may be a corruption of *mizmor*, whence, in Jewish oriental manuscripts, is formed a broken plural,

In the Septuagint the whole collection is styled *ψαλμοί* (Psalms), songs sung to a musical accompaniment; and, elsewhere in Hellenistic Greek, sometimes *ψαλτήριον*, a word properly denoting, in the first instance, a stringed instrument (*psantêrin* in the Book of Daniel; English, *psaltery*), and then the song or songs sung thereto (English, *psalter*). In the New Testament the Psalter is called *βιβλος ψαλμῶν*, "the Book of Psalms" (Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20). From the LXX the name was adopted by the Vulgate, and so came into general use in the Christian church.

III. *Existing Division of the Psalms.*—The Psalms are divided in our Hebrew Bibles into five books, the close of each of the first four being marked by a doxology: the one hundred and fiftieth Psalm itself, perhaps, as Delitzsch suggests, occupying the place of a doxology at the end of the last. These books are distributed as follow: Book I. contains Psalms i.–xli.; Book II. Psalms xlii.–lxxii.; Book III. Psalms lxxiii.–lxxxix.; Book IV. Psalms xc.–cvi.; Book V. Psalms cvii.–cl. Hilary (*Prol. in Librum Psalmorum*) mentions this division, and observes on the *fiat, fiat* (Amen, Amen), with which the several books conclude, but thinks himself bound by the authority of the apostle (Acts i. 20), who speaks of *the Book of Psalms* to reject this division. On the other hand, he considers it absurd to call them "the Psalms of David," because the names of so many other authors are given in the inscriptions. Cassiodorus, in like manner, declares for one book instead of five, but strangely assigns the existing fivefold arrangement to Jerome, who, in the Preface to his Psalter, expressly discards it. Augustine (on Psalm cl.) is of the same opinion, confessing that he can discern no reason for the division. Hippolytus, on the other hand, whose words are afterwards quoted by Epiphanius, styles the Psalter "a second Pentateuch." His words are: Τοῦτό σε μὴ παρέλθοι, ὦ φιλόλογε, ὅτι καὶ τὸ ψαλτήριον εἰς πέντε διείλον βιβλία οἱ Ἑβραῖοι, ὥστε εἶναι καὶ αὐτὸ ἄλλον πεντάτευχον. In accordance with this is the Midrash on Psalm i. 1: "Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the law, and corresponding to these (בְּנִגְדָם) David gave them the Book of Psalms, which consists of five books." "This division," says Delitzsch, perhaps somewhat fancifully, "makes the Psalter the counterpart of the law, which it also resembles in this, that as in the law Jehovistic and Elohist sections alternate, so here a group of Elohist Psalms (xlii.–lxxxiv.) is inserted between two groups of Jehovistic Psalms (i.–xli.; lxxxv.–cl.).

*mizmôr.* In the Old Testament there occurs no plural of *mizmor*. In later Hebrew, both *mizmorim* and *mizmoroth* are occasionally employed as names of the Psalms.

The Psalter is also a Pentateuch, the echo of the Mosaic Pentateuch from the heart of Israel; it is the fivefold book of the congregation to Jehovah, as the law is the fivefold book of Jehovah to the congregation."

The doxologies which stand at the end of Psalms xli., lxxii., and lxxxix., stand there appropriately, as marking the close of certain groups or distinct collections of Psalms. But there seems no such natural appropriateness in the position of the fourth doxology. There is no reason, as Ewald has observed, why Psalm cvi. should be separated from Psalm cvii. It was placed here, therefore, by the last collector or editor of the Psalms, in order to make up the fivefold division. Three divisions already existed from an earlier date. The rest of the Psalms, from Psalm xc. to cl., gradually collected, most of them after the Exile, would have formed one long fourth book, out of proportion to the rest, but for this division, which, making two books out of one, brought the whole into conformity with the arrangement of the law. It is not improbable, indeed, that this division into five books was made after the model of the Pentateuch; but when, or by whom, it was made it is now impossible to say. All that we know is, that the division is as old as the Book of Chronicles, and therefore as old as the time of Nehemiah; for in 1 Chron. xvi. 35, 36, there is a free citation of verses 47, 48 of the one hundred and sixth Psalm, the latter of which forms the doxology with which the fourth book concludes. But this doxology, there is every reason to suppose, was added later than any of the others. The first three books represent, in the main, three original collections, as we shall see; the first belonging to the early period, the second and third to what may be called the middle period of the Jewish monarchy.

IV. *The Gradual Formation of the Psalter.* — 1. One of the first things which strikes us in an examination of the inscriptions, is that for the most part groups of Psalms by the same author are brought together. This fact is an indication that originally a number of smaller collections must have existed independently, which were afterwards united in one. The first book consists, with two or three exceptions, of Psalms of David; the second, of a series of Psalms by the sons of Korah, and another series by David; the third, of two minor collections, one supposed to be by Asaph, and the other by the sons of Korah. In the fifth we have one group of "Pilgrim songs," and another group of Hallelujah Psalms, each of them manifestly, in the first instance, distinct hymn-books or liturgies.

2. Again, a new book frequently begins with a new collection, and this is followed by a series of Psalms, intended to be a supplement to the preceding book. So, for instance, Book II. was a Korahite selection,

enlarged by the addition of a number of Psalms of David, which had escaped the notice of the compiler of the first book.

3. The same Psalm occurs in different books, with some variation, such as would be due partly to accident in its transmission from mouth to mouth, partly to design where it had been adapted to new circumstances, and to express particular feelings. The fact, however, that certain Psalms (the fourteenth and fifty-third, the latter part of the fortieth and seventieth, the fifty-seventh, sixtieth, and one hundred and eighth) are thus repeated in different books, proves incontestably that these books were originally separate collections.

4. *Use of the Divine Names.* — The distinct use of the divine names lends a characteristic feature to some of the books. Thus, in the first book, Jehovah occurs two hundred and seventy-two times, and Elohim but fifteen. The next two books are chiefly Elohistie, at least as far as Psalm lxxxiv. From Psalm lxxxv. to the end of the Psalter, the name Jehovah again becomes prevalent, and to such an extent that in Books IV. and V. it occurs three hundred and thirty-nine times, and Elohim, of the true God, but once (cxliv. 9). It is owing to this peculiarity in the use of the divine names, as it would seem, that the Korahite Psalm lxxxiv. is subjoined to the Elohistie Psalms of Asaph, which immediately precede. Of David's seventy-one Psalms, eighteen are Elohistie; of the Korahite, nine; of Asaph's all. Add to these one of Solomon's, and four anonymous ones, and we have in all (reckoning Psalms xlii. and xliii. as one) forty-four, in which the name Elohim predominates. They form the middle portion of the Psalter, and have preceding them forty-one, and following them sixty-five, Jehovistic Psalms.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch, Ueber den Psalter, ii. 388.

No probable explanation of this phenomenon has yet been given. Ewald supposes that the collector of the second book purposely changed the name throughout all these Psalms from Jehovah to Elohim, influenced, perhaps, by the same sort of superstitious feeling which prevents the modern Jews from uttering the sacred name Jehovah. But there is no foundation for such an hypothesis, nor is it consistent with the fact that the later Psalms have, by preference, the name Jehovah. The attempts of Hengstenberg and others, and recently of some English critics, to show that the two names are always used with reference to their distinct meaning — Jehovah as the covenant God of Israel, Elohim as God the creator and governor of the world — must be regarded as equally unsatisfactory. One fact entirely overthrows it, viz. that the same Psalm appears both in a Jehovistic and an Elohistie recension. Bishop Colenso's theory is the most extravagant of all. As, according to him, Samuel introduced the name Jehovah, so this name is first found in the later Psalms of David, and in those portions of the Pentateuch which are later than Samuel, the Elohistie Psalms being earlier than the Jehovistic sections



*Extent of the several Collections.*—Let us now examine the several books more closely, and endeavor to ascertain how far the original collection extended. The first book consists entirely of Psalms attributed to David, with the exception of four, which in the Hebrew text are without any name; the first, the second, the tenth, and the thirty-third. But the first was regarded usually (see Introduction to the Psalm) as a general prologue to the book, and according to an ancient arrangement, the second Psalm was united with the first. In the version of the LXX, the tenth Psalm forms one with the ninth; and the thirty-third, however wrongly, is called a Psalm of David. In later books we find in the same way shorter collections of songs supposed to be David's, and these for the most part grouped together.

But did the original collection end here, or did it extend beyond the first book? At first sight we might be disposed to think that it extended as far as Psalm lxxii., which closes with a notice implying that up to that point none but Psalms of David, or Psalms at least of his time, had been collected. This collection too, it might be argued, was formed by Solomon, who concluded it with a Psalm either written by himself, or, as some have conjectured, composed by David originally, and reduced to its present form by Solomon. It is far from improbable, as I have pointed out in the Introduction to Psalm i., that that Psalm was written by Solomon, and by him prefixed to the first collected edition of his father's poetry.<sup>1</sup> We might thus suppose the royal editor to have pub-

of the Pentateuch. But all the facts are against such a theory. The Psalms of the first book (which he scarcely notices), are, by the consent of all critics, the earliest in the collection, and these are Jehovistic. Many of David's later Psalms (as the fifty-first, the sixtieth, the sixty-third, etc.), are Elohistie; many of his earlier, Jehovistic. Other Psalms of the age of Hezekiah (or at the earliest of Jehoshaphat), as xlv. — xlviii., and Psalms confessedly of the period of the Exile, are Elohistie. How impossible, then, it is to contend that Elohim is a mark of antiquity in a Psalm, Jehovah of a more recent date. This has been well argued by Professor Harold Browne (now Bishop of Ely), in his reply to Bishop Colenso. His criticisms, both on the Psalms and on the Pentateuch are, I rejoice to find, on many important points, confirmatory of my own.

<sup>1</sup> I can now add a circumstance in favor of that hypothesis, for the notice of which I am indebted to my friend Mr. George Grove. He remarked to me that the writer of the first Psalm must, he thought, have been a dweller in Northern Palestine, or one familiar with its scenery. To such a person the image of the tree planted by the channels of waters, whose leaf does not wither, would be far more natural than to an inhabitant of the southern district, where the streams only run in winter, and are soon dried up. Now Solomon, we know, had his summer-palace of Lebanon, and must consequently have often passed through a country which would have suggested the image employed in the Psalm. Indeed, would not such a phenomenon be more striking to one who saw it occasionally, than to one who had it constantly before his eyes?

lished the book with a preface and a conclusion of his own. But the internal evidence of the second book overthrows this hypothesis. The first book contains few Psalms that can be certainly assumed to be later than the time of David. The second book contains some unquestionably Davidic songs, and one of Asaph, which may possibly be the genuine work of Asaph the seer. But it contains also a series of Psalms ascribed to the Korahite singers, many of which, it is perfectly clear, could have been written by no contemporary of David. The forty-sixth Psalm (perhaps the forty-seventh) and the forty-eighth are almost certainly as late as the time of Hezekiah, and are songs of triumph celebrating the defeat of Sennacherib. By some critics, indeed, they are placed in the reign of Jehoshaphat, but no commentator of repute has placed them earlier. The date of the forty-fourth has been much questioned, but it may perhaps be Maccabean, as Calvin was disposed to think. It contains an assertion of national innocence strangely at variance with all that we know of the earlier history of Israel, and with the uniform language of the prophets. The sixty-fifth, sixty-sixth, and sixty-seventh Psalms may be referred most probably to the times of the Assyrian invasion, the seventy-first to the time of Jeremiah, and indeed it may have been written by the prophet himself; the sixty-ninth seems to have been as late even as the Exile.

*First Collection of Psalms.* — The internal evidence, then, leads irresistably to the conclusion that the original collection was of smaller compass, and consisted, we may reasonably suppose, of those poems mainly, if not exclusively, which are now classed in the first book. These, I incline to think, were first collected by Solomon, who would naturally provide for the preservation and transmission of his father's poetry, the more so as the musical services of the Temple were by his direction conducted with the utmost magnificence, though he himself apparently contributed little or nothing to the anthems and liturgies of that service. It is not, however, necessary therefore to assume that *all* the Psalms of the first book were written by David or his contemporaries; for at a later period some might have been added to the collection as first made by Solomon.

*Collection under Hezekiah.* — The next collection was probably not completed till the time of Hezekiah. To "the men of Hezekiah" we owe the preservation of many proverbs of Solomon not included in the first collection of his Proverbs (xxv. 1). To them we may in like manner be indebted for the discovery and preservation of many of those Psalms attributed to David, which we find grouped together in the second book. The peculiarity of this book is, that it consists first of a

group of Psalms attributed to the sons of Korah, then of a single Psalm said to be by Asaph, then of another group mostly bearing the name of David. In the third book we meet with a similar phenomenon. Here we have but one Psalm, the eighty-sixth, which is said to be a Psalm of David, and we have first a group of Psalms called Psalms of Asaph (lxxiii.—lxxxiii.), and then a group of Korahite Psalms, forming a supplement to those in the second book, precisely as David's Psalms in the second book form a supplement to those in the first.

Now we are told, in 2 Chron. xxix. 30, that Hezekiah, when he kept that great passover which filled all Jerusalem with joy, and which seemed the beginning of a better and happier time, appointed the Levites to "praise Jehovah in the words of David and of Asaph the seer." Such a fact harmonizes exactly with what we have seen as to the formation of the second and third books of the Psalms. Psalms of David are contained in the one, Psalms of Asaph in the other. And what more likely than that the compiler (or compilers) of these two books should have appended the remark at the end of lxxii. 20, in order to intimate that he knew of no more Psalms which could with any show of reason be assigned to David? The fact that we have but one Psalm going by his name in the third book, lends color to the supposition that the person who compiled the book wrote the words which now stand as the conclusion of Psalm lxxii.

*Collection under Ezra and Nehemiah.*—No further additions were made to the Psalter till the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, when it was enriched by a large number of songs written during and after the Exile. To this period are due, in the main, the fourth and fifth books. With these later Psalms were incorporated, however, some gleanings from earlier times; some precious relics of the ancient Psalmody of Israel not hitherto classed in any collection, and possibly preserved some of them only by oral repetition from father to son. The fourth book opens with a Psalm said to be "a prayer of Moses, the man of God." Then follows a series without names, and in this book two only, the one hundred and first and one hundred and third, are said to be by David. In the fifth book we have fifteen more attributed to him, some obviously by mistake, others, as the one hundred and tenth, beyond all doubt rightly so attributed. From all this we conclude, first, that the formation of the present Psalter was a gradual work, and next, that though several individual Psalms have been dislocated, so as to disturb the chronological order, another order having been substituted for that of sequence in time, yet that in the main, the oldest Psalms stand first; the latest, last. The most ancient songs, those of David and of David's

time, are chiefly contained in Psalms i.-xli. In xlii.-lxxxix. mainly those of the middle period of Hebrew poetry. In xc.-cl. by far the majority are of a later date, composed during or after the Babylonish captivity.

But as in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, so here the chronological order seems to be recognized, only to be crossed and broken by another. The groups, as a whole, are chronologically disposed, but not so the several Psalms. Here a different principle of arrangement has been observed, and one to a great extent of a merely external kind. Psalms are placed together, sometimes because the instruction conveyed in both is the same; sometimes because the same word or expression occurs in both: thus, for instance, Psalm li. (David's) follows Psalm l. (Asaph's), because both disparage the sacrifices of slain beasts, as compared with the personal sacrifice of a broken heart and an obedient will. Again, Psalm xxxv. follows Psalm xxxiv., because in both mention is made of "the angel of Jehovah." Psalms liv. and lv. are associated, because in verse four of the one we have "O God, hear my prayer;" and in verse two of the other, "Give ear, O God, to my prayer."<sup>1</sup>

This principle being once recognized, we may understand how it comes to pass that later Psalms may be found in the earlier books, and earlier Psalms in the later. Psalms by the same author would, almost as a matter of course, be characterized by certain peculiarities of expression. Some proof of this will be given in the next chapter. Hence many such Psalms, originally placed together, would be left as they were first placed, and others, again, would be inserted here and there, where some link of affinity suggested that a place might be found for them. Thus it was that the chronological order held its ground partially; and thus we can account for the exception to, and deviation from, that order. Beyond this, it would be folly to attempt to go. To give a reason for the place of each Psalm is as impossible as to give a reason for the order of the different Suras in the Koran; though there, in like manner, we see a general principle adhered to, the larger Suras coming first, and the smaller afterwards, without any regard to chronological sequence. In the *Divan* of Armul Kais, the poems are differently arranged in different mss., without any apparent reason or plan being discernible. In the Vedas, on the other hand, it has been noticed that there are the same external points of connection as in the Psalms. Invocations addressed to the same divinities (as in the Psalms the same

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch, both in his *Commentary* and in his *Symbolae ad Psalmos illustrandos*, has endeavored to show that the order of all the Psalms rests upon a principle of this kind.



divine name), hymns referring to the same circumstances, and prayers for similar occasions are usually classed together.<sup>1</sup>

V. *Numbering of the Psalms*.—Two other points require some notice: (1) the separation of the several Psalms from one another; and (2) the integrity of each in the form in which we have them in our existing collection.

(1) As regards the first, every Psalm which is provided with an inscription, is by that very circumstance separated from the Psalm immediately preceding: but it is otherwise with those which have no inscription. Here, in the MSS. of the original collection, there would be little to distinguish between the end of one Psalm and the beginning of the next, nothing more, perhaps, than a small space between the two, or, at the most, the beginning of the Psalm would be marked by the beginning of another line. Hence copyists might easily make mistakes, and we find that the LXX (who are followed by the Vulgate) make, in four instances, a distribution different from that of the Hebrew text. They combine Psalms ix. and x., and also cxiv. and cxv. into a single Psalm. On the other hand, they divide cxvi. into two, verses 1–9, 10–19; and in like manner cxlvii. into two, verses 1–11, 12–20.

The following table will exhibit the respective arrangements of the two texts:

HEBREW.	LXX. VULGATE.	HEBREW.	LXX. VULGATE.
Ps. ix., x.	Ps. ix.	Ps. cxvii.–cxlvi.	Ps. cxvi.–cxlv.
xi.–cxiii.	x.–cxii.	cxlvii.	cxlv., cxlvii.
cxiv., cxv.	cxiii.	cxlviii.–cl.	cxlviii.–cl.
cxvi.	cxiv., cxv.		

In these cases the division in the Hebrew text seems preferable to the other. There are several other instances in which, although the two texts harmonize, yet the existing division appears doubtful.

Thus, it is almost certain that Psalms xlii., xliii. were originally but one poem. Less probably the same may have been the case with cxiii., cxiv.; and cxvii. (which is only two verses) may have originally belonged to cxviii.

On the other hand, some Psalms which now appear as one have been formed, it has been conjectured, out of two. As, for instance, Psalm xix. 1–6, and 7–14; xxiv. 1–6, and 7–10; xxvii. 1–6, and 7–14; xxxii. 1–7, and 8–11.

But in most of these cases there is little reason for disturbing the existing arrangement.

(2) *Changes Introduced into the Psalms*.—Many of the Psalms have not come down to us in their original form. (a) Later additions, omis-

<sup>1</sup> Stähelin, *Einleitung*, pp. 382, 383.

sions, and other alterations have been purposely made in order to adapt them to special occasions. (*b*) Owing to a long-continued and widely-spread oral transmission, various lesser changes in the text would of necessity take place. We have an instance of the variations which would thus arise in comparing the two versions of the eighteenth Psalm, the version which is found in 2 Sam. xxii. being, in fact, the more popular of the two. Other examples of deviation, partly accidental, partly due to design, may be found on comparing Psalm lxx. with the latter portion of Psalm xl., from which it was both detached and altered; and Psalm liii. with Psalm xiv. In the last instance the changes seem to have been made purposely to adapt the Psalm to a particular emergency.

We have a striking instance of addition to an ancient poem in Psalm li., of which the two last verses were obviously added at the time of the return from the Exile, the Psalm itself having been written by David, as the title correctly informs us.

Psalm cviii. is compounded of portions of two other Psalms, lvii. 8-12, and lx. 7-14. Similarly the Psalm given in 1 Chron. xvi. 8-36, is a composition from Psalms xcvi., cv., and cvi. 1, 47. It is possible, in like manner, that the two parts of Psalm xix. were borrowed from two originally distinct poems, and designedly placed together by some later hand. Design is manifestly shown in the juxtaposition of the two, the glory of God in nature, and the glory of God in his law; and, at the same time, the style of the two portions is widely different.

It is plain, then, that these ancient Hebrew songs and hymns must have suffered a variety of changes in the course of time similar to those which may be traced in the older religious poetry of the Christian church, where this has been adapted by any means to the object of some later compiler. Thus, hymns once intended for private use became adapted to public. Words and expressions applicable to the original circumstances of the writer, but not applicable to the new purpose to which the hymn was to be put, were omitted or altered. It is only in a critical age that any anxiety is manifested to ascertain the original form in which a poem appeared. The practical use of hymns in the Christian church, and of the Psalms in the Jewish, far outweighed all considerations of a critical kind; or rather these last never occurred. Hence it has become a more difficult task than it otherwise would have been to ascertain the historical circumstances under which certain Psalms were written. Some traces we find leading us to one period of Jewish history; others which lead to another. Often there is a want of cohesion between the parts of a Psalm; often an abruptness of transition which we can hardly account for, except on the hypothesis that we no longer read the Psalm in its original form.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE PSALMS.

THE Inscriptions of the Psalms are chiefly of three kinds.

I. Those which mark their musical or liturgical character.

II. Those which assign them to particular authors.

III. Those which designate the particular circumstances under which a Psalm was composed.

Any of these may occur separately, or be combined to form one title.

I. We distinguish here between what may be called the liturgical and the musical notices.

i. *Liturgical Notices*.—To the former belong such formulae as the often repeated לְמַנְצֵחַ (*lam'natsäach*), "For the Precentor," or leader of the Temple choir. E. V. "To the Chief Musician." It occurs fifty-five times in the inscriptions. The word is derived from נָצַח, "to be strong"; in the Piel, "to have the mastery"; and is used in 2 Chron. ii. 17, in the general sense of "leader." It may mean, therefore, either the leader of the band, or of the singers; or, perhaps, rather (comp. Hab. iii. 19; Ps. iv., vi.) the person to whom the song was given in order that it might be set to music for the Temple service, and who superintended the practice of the Levitical choirs.<sup>1</sup> In three Psalms (xxxix., lxii., lxxvii.) the name of Jeduthun (or Ethan) is added, who we know was one of David's three famous choir-masters. It is worthy of remark that, except in the case of two Psalms (lxvi., lxvii.) which are anonymous, this title is only prefixed to Psalms of David, Asaph, or the Korahites.

לְלַמֵּד (*lamméd*), "For teaching," Ps. lx. This may perhaps intimate that the Psalm was intended to be taught publicly by the Levites to the people, but it may also mean that it was to be taught to the

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, Poet. B. i. 171; Delitzsch, Psalm. ii. 391. Stähelin, Einl. 374. In this case the לְ may be used in a sense more nearly approaching its use when prefixed to the names of the authors of the Psalms. It may mean not "for" the precentor, but "of" the precentor, as signifying that the musical accompaniment of the Psalm came from him.

Levites themselves. Delitzsch connects it with 2 Sam. i. 18, where David gives his elegy to be sung when the children of Judah are taught the use of the bow, קָשֶׁת ב' ר' לְלַמֵּד, or the song itself may have been entitled "the bow."

לְהַזְכִּיר (*l'hazkîr*), "To bring to remembrance," Ps. xxxviii. and lxx. (see note on the title of the former). In 1 Chron. xvi. 4, it is joined with לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל, "to give thanks and to praise," as a part of the special duties of the Levites who were set by David before the ark, and there it would seem to mean "to call to memory," so as to praise and celebrate the goodness of Jehovah. Delitzsch (in Ps. xxxviii. 1) connects it with the אֲזָכָרָה (*azkarah*), or "offering of incense," at the time of offering which these Psalms were to be sung. Ewald, on the other hand, admitting that such may have been its use, interprets it "to use as incense," and supposes it to mean a prayer offered in the Temple, which ascends to heaven and *reminds* God of men, Ps. cxli. 2; Rev. viii. 4.

לְהוֹדָה (*l'lhodah*), "For thanksgiving," Ps. c., Delitzsch explains in like manner, as a direction that the Psalm should be sung when the thank-offering was offered; Ewald, that it should be sung as a thanksgiving.

ii. *Musical Notices*. — Notices of a musical kind. Such are, (a) the different names by which a Psalm is described.

שִׁיר (*shîr*), "A song," xli., the most general name, and מִזְמוֹר (*mizmor*), "A Psalm," properly as sung with instrumental accompaniment, from זָמַר, which means both "to sing" and "to play."<sup>1</sup> These two are frequently united (שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר), xlviii., lxvi., lxxxiii., lxxxviii., cviii., and in the reverse order, מ' ז', xxx., lxvii., lxviii., lxxxvii., xcii.), which may perhaps be explained, as Stähelin suggests, by the fact that there were different editions of the same poem; for in lxv., lxxv., lxxvi., the words are separated from one another by intervening words, which shows that they are not merely a compound expression, but represent the same Psalm in two different musical aspects.

מִכְתָּם (*michtam*), LXX στιλογραφία, Ps. xvi. (see note <sup>a</sup> there) and lvi.-lx.; perhaps a "Golden Poem," or it may be connected with the

<sup>1</sup> Ewald (Poet. B. i. 24), has rightly explained the root-idea as expressing that which is *pure, clear, well-ordered*. Hence (1) in its lower sense (in the active form of the verb) it is "to purge," "to prune," *putare, amputare*, said of taking away the superfluous wood of a vine, or of "snuffing" a candle; (2) it means also *computare*, "to number," and so to "arrange" in proper rhythm, and with proper music to sing and play, as *numerus*, = *πυθμός ἀριθμός*. It is used of a song as accompanied by any instruments, not merely stringed instruments, as is evident from the Aram. זָמַר Dan. iii. 5, 6, which means *music* in general.



Arabic **كتم**, “to hide,” and so “a mystery,” “a song of deep import.”

**מִשְׁכִּיל** (*maskil*), LXX *συνέσεως, εἰς σύνεσιν*, “A finely, skilfully constructed ode,” xxxii. (see note there), xlii., xlv., lii.-lv., lxviii., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxviii., lxxxix., cxlii. So I think Ewald has rightly explained the word, and some such meaning is rendered necessary by its use, not in the inscription, but in the body of the Psalm, in xlvii. 7 [8], where as following **וְזָמַר**, it must mean either “in a skilful strain,” or “a skilfully constructed song.”

**שִׁגְיֹן** (*shiggaion*), Ps. vii. (see note there), perhaps “An irregular or dithyrambic ode,” from **שָׁגָה**, “to wander.” The LXX render it by *ψαλμός*, the Arab. “a lament,” the Syr. “a hymn.” But all these renderings are doubtful, as in Hab. iii. we find **עַל שִׁגְיוֹנוֹת**, “*Upon shigio-noth*,” the preposition denoting, in the inscriptions of the Psalms, either the instrument *upon* which, or the melody *after* which, the Psalm was to be sung. Ewald, however (*Poet. B. i.* 176), explains “After the manner of dithyrambs,” or “To dithyrambic measures,” and contends that **עַל** is used as in the phrases “*Upon 'Alamoth*,” “*Upon the She-minith* (octave),” to denote, not the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung, but a particular kind of music.

*Other names.*—Four other names occurring in the inscriptions are not properly of a musical character. These are:—

(1) **הַתְּהִלָּה** (*t'hillah*), “A hymn,” only found in Ps. cxlv., though properly applicable to a large number of the Psalms. All which were composed on any occasions of joy, triumph, thanksgiving, and designed for public worship, might fittingly be described as “praises” or “hymns.”

(2) **הַתְּפִלָּה** (*t'phillah*), “A prayer,” Ps. xvii., lxxxvi., xc., cii., cxlii. (See also Hab. iii.) A whole collection of David's songs are styled “the Prayers of David,” lxxii. 20.

(3) **שִׁיר יְרֵדוֹת** (*shîr y'dîdôth*), “Song of loves,” Ps. xlv., a song, that is, the subject of which is love.

(4) *Songs of Degrees.*—**שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת** (*shîr hamma'alôth*), “Song of the ascents.” LXX *ὠδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν*. Ital. and Vulg. *canticum graduum*. E.V. “Song of Degrees.” Ps. cxx.-cxxxiv. This has been variously explained. a. Gesenius, who is followed by Delitzsch and others, supposes that by this title the peculiar rythmical structure of these Psalms is denoted, according to which, a word or expression in one verse is taken up and repeated in the next, this being done in a sort of ascending scale or ladder, whence the name. But there are two objections to this view: first, that all the Psalms bearing this title have not this rythmical structure; and next, that this structure is not

peculiar to these Psalms. It is found also in Ps. xxix., in Isa. xvii. 12, xxvi. 5, etc., and in the song of Deborah, Judg. v. β. Some of the later Jewish expositors suppose that these fifteen Psalms were sung upon the fifteen *steps* leading from the court of the men to the court of the women; but the Talmud (*Middoth*, ii. 5; *Succa*, 51 *b*) only compares the fifteen Psalms to the fifteen steps, and gives a different explanation of the title elsewhere (*Succa*, 53 *a*). γ. Others, again, explain “songs of the goings-up,” *i.e.* from Babylon, songs sung by the exiles on their return, comp. Ezra vii. 9, where the return is spoken of as *הַמַּעֲלָה מִבָּבֶל*, “the going-up from Babylon.” And there can be no doubt that the contents of most of these Psalms favor such an explanation. δ. But the plural *הַמַּעֲלִיּוֹת* makes it more probable that the yearly “goings-up” to keep the great festivals at Jerusalem are meant.<sup>4</sup> Hence the title “song of the goings-up,” = “a pilgrim song.” That the caravans “went up” with singing, is evident from Isa. xxx. 29. The allusions to the Exile are readily explained by the fact that these Psalms, or some of them, were composed for the pilgrimages to the second Temple.

(*b*) *Instruments*. — Particular instruments by which the Psalm was to be accompanied, when sung.

*אֶל-הַנְּחִילֹת*, “To the flutes,” Psalm v., stands for *אֶל-הַלִּילֹת*.

*בְּנִינִיּוֹת*, “With stringed instruments,” Ps. iv., vi., liv., lv., lxvii., lxxvi.; and *עַל-קִנְיָה*, “Upon a stringed instrument,” lxi.

But Ewald objects to the first, that flutes were not used in the Temple service. To this Delitzsch (on Ps. v.) replies, by referring to Isa. xxx. 29, and compares 1 Sam. x. 5, 1 Kings i. 40, which would at least show that the flute (*chālil*) was used in religious services, and flutes are mentioned in the Mishna and Gemara, *Erachin* 10 *a*, among the instruments of music used in the second Temple.

To the interpretation of *'al n'gînath* Ewald also objects, because he says the preposition ought to be *בְּ*, not *עַל*, though, as he admits that the latter preposition is employed in xcii. 4, this objection is not fatal to the common view. (*Poet. B.* i. 175.)

(*c*) *Measures*. — A particular tone or measure to which the Psalm was to be adapted.

Two of these, *עַל-צִלְמוֹת*, Ps. xlvi., “After the manner of maidens,” and *עַל-הַשְּׁמִינִיּוֹת*, Ps. vi. xii., “Upon the octave (below),” occur also in the historical books, 1 Chron. xv. 20, 21, and it has been conjectured that the former refers to the high voice of the women singers — the soprano; the latter to the deep voice of the men — the bass, upon the lower octave. Ewald objects, in one place, that we have one evidence

that the Hebrews were acquainted with the octave in music; in another, he observes that the prep. על cannot be here employed to denote different kinds of *melodies*, because these two "Upon 'Alamoth" and "Upon the Sheminith," were to be united in the same solemn procession. It is equally plain that the two words do not mean instruments, because they are in each case associated with instruments; the first with the lute (*nabla*), the second with the harp (*kinnōr*). But there is no reason why different voices — sopranos and basses, or tenors and basses — should not have sung together. He finds the first formula again probably at the conclusion of Ps. xlviii. where the present Masoretic reading is על-מִוִּית, and again in the inscription of Ps. ix., where he supposes על-מִוִּית לְבָן to be a longer form of the same notice. He would read עֲלֻמִּית, one word, as it is found in some mss., and suggests that it is a noun formed after the analogy of יְלָדִית, and that thus the inscription may mean "youthful vigor hath the son."

עַל-תְּהִיחִי, Ps. viii., "Upon the Gittith," or, as the form of the word seems to imply, "after the Gittite manner," or "manner of Gath," some particular measure or style of music which had been borrowed from the Philistines, and named after one of their chief cities, as among the Greeks there were Phrygian and Lydian measures, etc.

עַל-יְדֻתָּון, "Upon, *i.e.* after the manner of, Jeduthun," one of the famous singers of David, who was perhaps, as Ewald suggests, the inventor of this particular measure.

עַל-מַחֲלָת, Ps. liii., and joined with לְעִוִּית, lxxxviii., "To sing after the manner of Machalath," may possibly be an inscription of the same kind, though other interpretations of it have been given. See note \* on Ps. liii.

(d) *Particular Melodies.* — A particular melody after which the Psalm was to be sung. Popular airs already in vogue were adapted to the service of the Temple. Such is the case, Delitzsch observes, with a great deal of the old church music; and the hymns of the synagogue (the Pijut) are set to old popular tunes. Inscriptions of this kind are to be found in Ps. xxii., "After the song beginning, Hind of the dawn"; Ps. lvi., "After the song, The silent dove in far-off lands," or perhaps "The dove of the distant terebinths." Similarly we find "Destroy not," Ps. lvii.—lix., lxxv., these being probably the first words of some well-known song; and "After lilies," xlv., lxix., "After lilies, the testimony," lxxx., or "After the lily of the testimony," lx.; though some would explain this of a lily-shaped instrument. Perhaps the inscription of Ps. ix. admits of a like interpretation. The preposition על may there denote that the Psalm was to be sung to an air

beginning with the words, "Death of the son," or, as Delitzsch would render, "Death makes wise." See above, under (c).

The older interpreters regarded all these expressions as so many mottoes or devices, designed to convey, with enigmatical brevity, the purport and meaning of the Psalm. Thus, for instance, in Ps. xxii., "the hind" was emblematic of suffering; "the dawn," of deliverance. In lvi. "the silent dove" was innocence suffering in patience, and so on. Paulus Melissus, in his translation of the Psalter (1572), was the first who suggested what may now be called the generally received explanation; and J. H. Alsted, in his *Triumphus Bibliorum Sacrorum* (1625), anticipated and even surpassed, says Delitzsch, all modern investigations on this subject. That this class of notices is properly musical, is evident, from the fact that they only occur in those Psalms which have "For the Precentor, or Chief Musician," in their inscriptions. They are clearly, therefore, not intended, as Hengstenberg still takes them, to denote the subject of the Psalm.

*Psalms not all intended for the Temple Service.*—Though the Psalms, as a whole, were collected for liturgical use, still it may be doubted whether they were all originally intended for the public worship of the sanctuary. Psalms like the third, the fourth, the seventh, seem, as Stähelin remarks, to have been composed with no such purpose. These and other Psalms, especially in the first book, appear rather, like the Olney Hymns, to have been the outpouring of personal feeling, the utterance of the sorrows and joys of the heart in its communion with God, with a view to private edification, and the relief of feelings which it was almost impossible to restrain (see Ps. xxxix.). Indeed, the Psalms of the first three books, Ps. i.-lxxxix., are in this respect different from the remaining Psalms, which are of a less personal and more general character. It may, perhaps, be owing to this circumstance, as Stähelin has suggested, that לַמְנַצֵּחַ, "For the Precentor," which occurs fifty-five times in all, in the inscriptions," is found fifty-two times in the first three books. In the case of the latter Psalms, it was understood as a matter of course, that they were designed for the Temple service; but in the case of the earlier Psalms, this direction, "For the Precentor," was prefixed with the very object of making them liturgical. The three Psalms, cix., cxxxix., cxl., where this direction appears in the later books, are such as, by their contents, required to be thus clearly marked as intended for public worship. Whereas, on the other hand, Psalms like the eighth, the twenty-ninth, the thirty-third, in the first book, did not require any such specification, because from their general character they might at once be assumed to be liturgical.



*The Selah.*—The same conclusion may be drawn from the occurrence of another musical sign, which, though not found in the inscriptions of the Psalms, may be noticed here; namely, the Selah. In the fifth book this occurs but four times, and of this number three times in one Psalm, the one hundred and fortieth, perhaps because, like the words “For the Precentor,” it stamped the Psalm with a liturgical character.

It is almost hopeless to attempt to give a satisfactory explanation of this word Selah. By the Targum, the Talmud, and Aquila, it has been rendered “eternity,” because in Ps. lxi. 5, and lxxxix. 38, it seemed to stand parallel with עוֹלָם, “for ever”; by Aben-Ezra, “amen”; by Gesenius, “pause, stillness, rest”; he derives it from סָלַח, or סָלָא, which he doubtfully connects with שָׁלַח, but such an interchange is hardly defensible; and, moreover, the meaning thus obtained does not apply where the Selah stands in the middle of a verse, or interrupts the sense, as in lv. 19 [20], lxvii. 7 [8], 33 [34], Hab. iii. 3, 9, or at the end of a Psalm, as in iii., ix., xxiv., where the “rest,” i.e. the cessation of the music or singing, would be understood of itself, and would not need to be pointed out. Others, again, would connect it with סָלַל, and explain it in the sense of “elevation,” “lifting up,” whether of the voice or of the music. As, however, it is most frequently introduced at the end of a strophe, it would seem more probably to imply the intervention at the particular place of a musical symphony. Hence the LXX render it διάψαλμα. And in the hopeless perplexity and darkness which beset the whole subject of Hebrew music, this may be accepted as the least improbable interpretation. The word derived from the root “to lift up,” was intended as a direction to the musicians to strike up in a louder strain. During the singing, the accompaniment would be soft and gently modulated. At particular parts the voices would cease, and then the louder instruments, such as the trumpets, etc., would be heard with full effect. So that, as Ewald says, the word would be equivalent to “up! aloud”! or in German, *die Musik laut!* This musical sign is clearly very ancient, inasmuch as it is found in all the old versions, and inasmuch also as even then its meaning was matter of debate and uncertainty.

For a full discussion of this subject, I would refer to Mr. Wright’s Article in Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible, where the various hypotheses are discussed. In this and in his other Articles on the Titles of the Psalms, he has exhausted the question, but not without admitting how little that is really satisfactory can be said.

Each of these various notices was intended, though we have now lost

the key to them, to give to the Psalm to which it was prefixed, as has been said, its proper musical or liturgical designation; and, except the *Selah*, they are all found in the titles of the Psalms.<sup>1</sup> Further, as regards the order of the notices themselves, the direction "For the Precentor" stands, as a rule, first, and then the particular instrument, or melody, to which the Psalm was to be sung. The exceptions to this are in xlvii., where the name of the author is inserted between the musical references, and lxxxviii., where the words "A song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah," precede them. It is possible that in these instances the title was not correctly copied.

Why it is that in the heading of one Psalm we have only "For the Precentor"; why in another the particular instrument is added, and in a third the particular tone or melody to which it was to be sung, cannot now be explained. There seems to be no reason, in the nature of the case, for these variations. All we can infer from the existing irregularity is, that these variations must have been as old as some of the separate collections, and that it was with them as with our modern hymn-books, some of which have prefixed to each psalm or hymn the tune to which it is to be sung, while others are published without such direction.

II. *Authors of the Psalms.* — We have next to consider those inscriptions which give us the name of the author.

This is always prefixed with the preposition לְ, "belonging to." So a Psalm is said "to belong to" David, or Solomon, or Asaph, according as it was written by one or the other. Out of the Psalter we find the same usage in Isa. xxxviii. 1 and Hab. iii. 1; and a similar one exists in Arabic. In some instances we have only the name, with the preposition prefixed: in others we have the fuller form of expression שִׁיר לְ, *song of* . . . , or, מְזִמֹּר לְ, *Psalm of* . . . , or the rarer words denoting the particular kind of poem, such as מְשֻׁבֵּל, מְבַהֵם, שְׁבִיר, etc., on the meaning of which, see above, p. 68. In one or two instances we find what may be called an historical description of the poem, joined with the name of the author, as is the case with some of the pilgrim-songs, and also with the title of Ps. xxx., "Song of the Dedication of the House."

1. *David.* — His name is prefixed to all the Psalms in the first book, with the few exceptions already noticed; and to most of the Psalms in the second half of the second book, li.-lxx., except lxvi. and lxvii. After this, his name appears once in the third book, Ps. lxxxvi.; twice

<sup>1</sup> The only possible exception to this rule is in Ps. xlviii., where a musical notice may have been placed at the end (see note there), as it is also in Hab. iii. 19.

in the fourth, ci. and ciii.; fifteen times in the fifth, cviii., cix., cx., cxvii. cxxiv., cxxxi., cxxxiii., cxxxviii.—cxlv. In all, therefore, he is said to have written seventy-three Psalms. In two Psalms of the first collection, the high title of “servant of Jehovah” is added to his name.

2. *David's Singers.*—These appear in the second and third books, as already noticed.

(a) *The Sons of Korah.*—Eleven Psalms, xlii.—xlix. (xlii. and xliii. being reckoned as one), lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., and lxxxviii. (according to the first of its two inscriptions), are ascribed to them. According to Num. xxvi. 58; 1 Chron. vi. 22; ix. 19; xii. 6, they were one of the oldest Levitical families, long before the time of David, and related to the still more ancient family of Kohath, the son of Levi. In the time of David, Heman the son of Joel, a member of this family, became famed for his skill in music and song; and hence, apparently, the Korahites obtained the name of “singers” (2 Chron. xx. 19). Hence it is that in the inscription of Psalm lxxxviii. we have, first, the general title, assigning it to “the sons of Korah,” and then the special, assigning it to Heman.

(b) *Asaph.*—He is said to have written twelve Psalms, l., lxxiii.—lxxxiii. He is one of the three famous singers of David, and holds amongst them, indeed, the foremost place, 1 Chron. xvi. 5 and xv. 17–21. In later times, he alone ranks with David, Neh. xii. 46; 1 Chron. vi. 29–32. In the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the “sons of Asaph” are mentioned in the same way as the “sons of Korah” in the inscriptions.

(c) *Ethan, the Ezrahite.*—He is named only as the author of one Psalm, the eighty-ninth. He is the third of David's great singers. See the passages quoted above.

Of these three leading men we know but little more; the notices of them in the historical books are but scanty. It would seem, however, that whilst (according to 1 Chron. vi.) each of the three was descended from one of the three great Levitical houses of Kohath, Gershom, and Merari, yet a comparison of 1 Kings v. 11 [E. V. iv. 31] and Psalms lxxxviii. and lxxxix. with 1 Chron. ii. 6, might rather lead us to conclude that Heman and Ethan were originally, like David, of the tribe of Judah, and only because of their high reputation and their great skill in music, which led them to establish and train Levitical choirs, were afterwards, by way of honor, enrolled in the tribe of Levi, as we find in the post-exile books.<sup>1</sup>

3. Besides these seventy-three Psalms of David, and twenty-four of

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, *Poet. Büch.* i. 212, 213.

his singers', we have, according to the Hebrew inscriptions, two of Solomon's, lxxii. and cxxvii.

4. One Psalm, the ninetieth, is attributed to Moses, "the man of God."

5. The LXX, in the title of Ps. cxxxvii., add to the name of David that of Jeremiah (τῷ Δαυίδ Ἰερεμίου), and in the titles of Ps. cxxxviii., cxlvi.—cxlviii., give the names of Haggai and Zechariah, whereas the three last have no inscription in the Hebrew text. In lxxi. they add to the name of David, "Of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first led captive."

About a third, therefore, of the Psalms are anonymous.

*Such Inscriptions, how far Trustworthy.* — The question here arises, How far are these inscriptions trustworthy? That in some cases the authors themselves may have prefixed their names to their poems may be granted. It may have been so, perhaps, in such instances as Isa. xxxviii. 9; Hab. iii. 1; yet it would be too much to infer, from these passages, that such was the custom of the Hebrew poets. There still remains the remarkable fact, not to be accounted for on that hypothesis, that so large a number of Psalms, especially of those in the fourth and fifth books, are anonymous.<sup>1</sup> Why is this? Why is it that David's name, and those of his singers, figure so prominently, whereas scarcely another author is mentioned? It has sometimes been argued that we have evidence of David's own custom in this respect, in the title of Ps. xviii., as confirmed by 2 Sam. xxii. 1: but in the title of Ps. xviii. David is styled "the servant of Jehovah," and, judging by the analogy of such cases as Deut. xxxiv. 5; Josh. i. 1; xxiv. 9; Judg. ii. 8, it seems most likely that this title was not bestowed upon him till after his death, and consequently that the inscription was not written by him. Nor is the question settled by an appeal to the practice of the Arabian poets.<sup>2</sup> For there seems every reason to doubt whether it was a custom with them to inscribe their poems with their names; otherwise, there could not be so much uncertainty respecting the authorship of very much of their poetry.<sup>3</sup> The same uncertainty has been observed in the case of the hymns of the Vedas, and those in the Zendavesta.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In particular, it is strange that none of the Psalms are, in the Hebrew, ascribed to any of the prophets, though some of them, as Isaiah and Habakkuk, are conspicuous as religious poets. The LXX do assign some of the later Psalms to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah.

<sup>2</sup> Keil in Hävernick's *Einleit.* p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Stähelin, *Einleit.* p. 387.

<sup>4</sup> De Wette, *Comm. Einl.* p. 77. Rückert, *Hamasa*, i. pp. 23, 29; see also, p. 45, where a poem of the famous Muhelhil Ibn Nobata is ascribed to an unknown author.



When we come to examine the Psalms more closely, and to compare their contents with their reputed authorship, we find ourselves compelled very often to reject the latter. Not only is it very difficult to believe that the author of Ps. iii., iv. could have been the author of Ps. ix., x.; not only is it evident—as in the inscription of Ps. cxxvii., where a misunderstanding of the words “except Jehovah build the house,” which were supposed to allude to the building of the Temple, led the Psalm to be ascribed to Solomon—that the inscriptions must sometimes have been due to the guess of a later collector; but, what is still more astonishing, some of the inscriptions involve us in glaring anachronisms. Psalms lxxiv., lxxix., for instance, which describe the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple, are said to be Psalms of Asaph, the contemporary of David.

*Attempts to defend the Inscriptions*—An attempt has sometimes been made, in order to maintain, at all hazards, the correctness of the inscriptions, to explain such anomalies. Hengstenberg, for instance, and Keil, would give a different meaning to the preposition בְּ, in cases like the last mentioned. According to these critics, it denotes here not that these Psalms were written by Asaph, but only by the family of Asaph; his name being prefixed because of his celebrity as head of the Levitical choir. But, as Stähelin observes, this is really to make “the sons of Asaph” guilty of a literary imposture, in prefixing the name of their ancestor to their own productions, in order to clothe them with a fictitious splendor. Besides, as we have in the corresponding form of inscription “the sons of Korah,” there seems no reason why we should not have had here, “the sons of Asaph.” Such facts prove convincingly that *all* the inscriptions are not trustworthy, and consequently that they must be tested by a careful examination of the style and contents of the Psalms to which they are severally prefixed. The question may, however, be asked, How came Psalms which are so manifestly not the work of Asaph to be ascribed to him? Can we *account* for the inscription, in such instances? Perhaps we can.

These Psalms are stamped by several peculiarities, which have been partly pointed out by Delitzsch, and still more fully by Stähelin.

*Peculiarities of Psalms attributed to Asaph.*—(1) In these Psalms God is, for the most part, spoken of as JUDGE; as exercising that judgment for his own glory, both in Israel and among the nations of the world. See Ps. l., lxxv., lxxvi., lxxxii. Ps. lxxiii., though it does not expressly mention God as Judge, is an acknowledgment of his righteous judgment upon earth—the more impressive, because it is the result of many doubts and questionings. Similarly, Ps. lxxviii.

and lxxxi. are in substance records of the divine judgment in the history of Israel.

(2) I may add, God is described frequently, in these poems, as the SHEPHERD, and Israel as the flock, lxxiv. 1; lxxvii. 20 [21]; lxxviii. 52, 71, 72; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1 [2]. The figure is employed elsewhere in the Psalms of the *people* of Israel, only in xxviii. 9; xcv. 7; c. 3.

(3) In the next place, we find in these Psalms God himself introduced as speaking, and that not merely in a brief and passing manner, as in other Psalms, but in a sustained and solemn discourse, continued through several verses (l., lxxv., lxxxi., lxxxii.).

(4) In several of these poems we find references to the giving of the law on Sinai, to the march through the wilderness, and to other portions of the ancient history of Israel, such as do not occur at least in the Psalms of the first two books. Comp., l., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxx., lxxxi., lxxxiii.

(5) In all these Psalms, both the divine names, Jehovah and Elohim, occur, and the former usually towards the end, where the language of the Psalm changes to supplication. See lxxiii. (where, however, 'Adonai Jehovah), lxxiv. 18, lxxvi. 11 [12], lxxx. 19 [20], lxxxi. 15 [16], lxxxiii. 16, 18 [17, 19]. Only l. has in the first verse Jehovah.

(6) Other names of God which are frequent in these Psalms are 'El (אֱל), which occurring in the whole Psalter sixty-four times, is found in the Psalms of Asaph alone sixteen times; and 'Elyōn (אֱלִיֹּן), "Most High," which occurs in these poems eight times, and in the rest of the Psalter, in all, twenty-two times.

(7) Again, Jacob and Joseph are mentioned together as representatives of the whole nation, lxxvii. 15 [16], and Israel and Joseph, lxxx. 1 [2], lxxxi. 4, 5 [5, 6]; in the last two places Joseph stands in the parallelism, and therefore as synonymous with Israel.

(8) Other modes of expression there are, which, if not peculiar to these Psalms, occur in them most frequently, such as הִזְכִּירָה, *to shine forth*, l. 2, lxxx. 1 [2], only in xciv. 1, besides: זֶה שָׂרָה, *that which moveth in the field*, l. 11, and lxxx. 13 [14]; the peculiar form of the stat. constr. הִזְכִּירָה, l. 10, lxxix. 2; the use of the verb נָהַג, *to describe* God's *leading* of his people, lxxx. 1 [2], lxxviii. (26) 52, elsewhere only xlviii. 14 [15], and the same thought lxxvii. 20 [21]; צֹאן מִרְעִית, lxxiv. 1, lxxix. 13, only twice besides in the Psalms; נָאֶה נֶאֱה, *pasture*, lxxiv. 20, lxxix. 7, lxxxiii. 12 [13]. The verb רָעָה, *to feed a flock*, is also common in these Psalms, see above (2). The verb שָׂרָה, *to burn*, which is found only three times in the Psalter, occurs in lxxiv. 8, lxxx. 16 [17]; שִׁבְט, in the sense of *tribe*, lxxiv. 2, lxxviii. 55, 68 (besides

only in cv. 37, cxxii. 4). מַשְׁחָוֹת, *destructions*, only lxxiii. 18, lxxiv. 3. מִקְדָּשׁ, *sanctuary*, lxxiii. 17, lxxiv. 7, lxxviii. 69, elsewhere only in lxviii. and xcviii.

There are, then, certain points of resemblance in all these Psalms sufficiently striking to have arrested the attention of transcribers, and to account for their having been ascribed to the same author. The selection, it is evident, must have rested on critical grounds — on the similarity of style, on the coincidence of the thoughts — and yet it is not a little remarkable that no attention seems to have been paid to the historical features of these Psalms. It is a manifest anachronism, as has been said, which would assign Psalms like the seventy-fourth and seventy-ninth, which speak of the destruction of the sanctuary, to Asaph, the contemporary of David. Either the more ancient tradition ascribed some of these Psalms to Asaph, and the rest were conjecturally placed with them from their general resemblance to those which went by his name, or perhaps there may have been originally a small, separate collection entitled “Psalms of Asaph,” into which others, at a later period, may have crept. How easily this might have occurred we see from the whole history of hymnology. It has repeatedly happened that the hymns of one author have been ascribed to another, either from conjecture when the author was unknown, or from carelessness when his name might have been ascertained.

If we now turn to another principal group of Psalms inscribed with the name of their authors — those attributed to the sons of Korah — we shall again find them stamped by certain features of resemblance. This group consists of Psalms xlii.–xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.

(1) *Peculiarities of Psalms attributed to the Sons of Korah.* As the Psalms of Asaph, for the most part, regard God as the JUDGE of the earth, so these Psalms delight to represent him as KING. Compare xlv. 4 [5], xlvii. 2 [3], 6, 7 [7, 8], lxxxiv. 3 [4], and even in xlv. 6 [7], the earthly king is portrayed as the symbol and visible type of the heavenly, as may be seen by comparing xlv. 6 [7] with xlvii. 3 [4].

(2) These Psalms are decidedly Elohistic, though in five of them, namely, xlv., xlvii., xlviii., lxxxiv., lxxxvii., the name Jehovah also occurs. In two of these Psalms, xlii. 2 [3], lxxxiv. 2 [3], God is called “the Living God” (אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּים), and nowhere else in the Psalter. Another name of God occurring several times in these Psalms, and but once beside in the Psalter (xxiv. 10), is “Jehovah of Hosts,” xlv. 7 [8], 11 [12], xlviii. 8 [9], lxxxiv. 1 [2], 3 [4], 12 [13], though we have in other Psalms “Adonai, Jehovah of Hosts,” lxix. 6 [7]; “Jeho-

vah Elohim (of) Hosts," lix. 5 [6], where see note, lxxx. 19 [20]; and "Jehovah God of Hosts,"

(3) Jerusalem is represented as being ever under the watchful care and protection of God, xlvi., xlvii., xlviii., lxxxvii., and hence is called "the city of God," xlvi. 4 [5]; xlviii. 8 [9]; lxxxvii. 3; only once besides "the city of Jehovah," ci. 8.

(4) Other words and phrases characteristic of these Psalms link them with the Psalms of Asaph; where, however, they are of less frequent occurrence. Such are מִשְׁכָּן, lxxxviii. 6 [7], 18 [19], comp. lxxiv. 20 (besides only cxliii. 3); the plural of מִשְׁכָּן, "dwellings," or "tabernacles," xliii. 3; xlvi. 4 [5]; xlix. 11 [12]; lxxxiv. 1 [2], elsewhere only lxxviii. 28 (a Psalm of Asaph), and cxxxii. 5, 7. The noun פֶּלֶא, "wonder," occurs three times in the Psalms of Asaph, and twice in those of the sons of Korah; מַשְׁבְּרִים, "breakers," in xlii. 7 [8]; lxxxviii. 7 [8], besides only in xciii. 4, and 2 Sam. xxii. 5. Psalms xlii., xliii., describe the same longing for the house of God, the same delight in visiting it, which are expressed in lxxxiv.

Two principal ideas stamp these Psalms: the one, the delight in the worship and service of Jehovah: the other, the thankful acknowledgement of God's protection vouchsafed to Jerusalem as the city of his choice.

*Similarity between the two Groups.* — On the whole there are many points of resemblance not only between the Psalms belonging to each several group, but between the two groups themselves. Not so special and personal as most of those ascribed to David, and not so general as those of the later books, inasmuch as they have some definite historical groundwork, they occupy a middle place between the two. The Korahite and Asaphite Psalms are, for the most part, national songs; either prayers for the nation in its distresses, or thanksgivings for deliverance vouchsafed; whilst the fact that so much is said in them of the sanctuary, so much longing for its solemn services, so much joy and delight therein, leads, no doubt, confirmation to the hypothesis that they were written by members of Levitical families. All tends to show that some kind of criticism was exercised in the arrangement of these poems. Possibly some tradition existed as to the style and manner of Korahite Psalms, for it is quite in accordance with the Oriental genius that a particular style of poetry should be perpetuated in the same family.

III. *Historical Notices in the Inscriptions.* — The third class of notices is that which purports to give an account of the particular occasion for which a Psalm was composed. These seem, for the most



part, nothing more than a kind of scholia, added by a later hand, though some of them may rest upon a genuine tradition.

The majority of them are questionable on the following grounds:

*a. Reasons for doubting them.*—They occur only in the Psalms of David. But if David's singers copied his example so closely as Hengstenberg would persuade us, and David himself prefixed these notices to his own Psalms, how is it that we find none in the Psalms ascribed to Asaph, Heman, etc.? The fact that we find these notices in the Psalms of David exclusively is easily accounted for, because the history of David is so much better known than that of the other Psalmists; and hence it would be comparatively an easy thing to fit particular Psalms to particular occasions in his life.

*b.* Nearly all these notices refer to events which are recorded in the history more at length, and many of them are borrowed, almost word for word, from the historical books. The inscription of Ps. xxxiv. is borrowed, but with some confusion, from 1 Sam. xxi. 14; that of Ps. lii. from 1 Sam. xxii. 9, etc.; that of Ps. liv. from 1 Sam. xxiii. 19; that of Ps. lvi. alludes to 1 Sam. xxi. 11–15 (but as it deviates somewhat from the narrative there, may perhaps be taken from some independent and trustworthy source); that of Ps. lvii., which is obscure, possibly refers to 1 Sam. xxii., as also Ps. cxlii.

*c.* We can trace, in some instances, how the notice in the inscription has been derived from words or allusions in the Psalm, even when it finds no support in the general tenor of the Psalm. Thus, in Ps. xxxiv. the notice seems to have been derived from תִּהְיֶה (vs. 3), and טָמְאָה (vs. 9), compared with 1 Sam. xxi. 14. The notice, in Ps. lix., “When Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death,” rests, apparently, on the allusions in vs. 6 [7], 10 [11], 14 [15].

*d.* The additions and deviations in the historical notices of the LXX (comp. Ps. lxxi., xciii., xcvi., xcvii., cxliii., cxliv.) show how common it was for the collectors to adopt different traditions, or perhaps to follow mere conjecture.

*e.* The analogy of the Arabic anthology of the Hamasa confirms the view above taken. The inscriptions are not derived from the author; but, as Rückert in his translation has shown (Band i. 7, 13, etc.), are often merely guessed at from the contents, and that contrary to all probability.<sup>1</sup>

*Some of these Notices trustworthy.*—Some of these historical notices, however, as I have said, are, beyond all reasonable doubt, ancient and trustworthy. Such are those chiefly in the first book; as, for instance,

<sup>1</sup> Stähelin, Einleitung, p. 398.

those contained in the titles of Ps. iii., vii., and xviii.; the last of which is further confirmed by its recurrence in that edition of the Psalm which is given in the history, 2 Sam. xxii. Much may also be said in favor of the notice in Ps. lx. This, though it alludes to the events mentioned in 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14 (comp. x. 16 and 1 Chron. xviii.), yet, as Ewald has observed, is clearly derived from other independent sources; the word הַצִּיחַ is a rare and ancient word; and the Psalm itself, though in its present form apparently adapted to a later occasion, is, in part, as old as David, and therefore the inscription may be as old as those of iii., vii., xviii.

The conclusion, then, at which we arrive here, is the same as in the case of the alleged authorship of certain Psalms. The inscriptions cannot always be relied on. They are sometimes genuine, and really represent the most ancient tradition. At other times, they are due to the caprice of later editors and collectors, the fruits of conjecture, or of dimmer and more uncertain traditions. In short, the inscriptions of the Psalms are like the subscriptions to the Epistles of the New Testament. They are not of any necessary authority, and their value must be weighed and tested by the usual critical processes.

THE PSALMS.



BOOK I.

PSALMS I.—XLI.





## PSALM I.

THIS Psalm seems to have been placed first in the collection, because, from its general character and subject, it formed a suitable introduction to the rest. It treats of the blessedness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked, topics which constantly recur in the Psalms, but it treats of them as if all experience pointed only in one direction. The moral problem which in other Psalms troubles the ancient poets of Israel, when they see the evil prospering and the good oppressed, has here no place. The poet rests calmly in the truth that it is well with the righteous. He is not vexed with those passionate questionings of heart which meet us in such Psalms as the thirty-seventh and seventy-third. Hence we may probably conclude that his lot was cast in happier and more peaceful times. The close of the Psalm, however, is, as Ewald remarks, truly prophetic, perpetually in force, and consequently descriptive of what is to be expected at all times in the course of the world's history.

In style the Psalm is simple and clear. In form it is little more than the expansion of a proverb.

The absence of any inscription, which is rare in the first book, seems to indicate that this Psalm was from the first regarded in the light merely of an introduction (*προοίμιον βραχύ*, as Basil calls it), and perhaps as Ewald suggests, originally to some older and smaller collection. In some mss. it is not numbered at all, being treated simply as a prologue or preface. This must have been a very early arrangement, as our present second Psalm is quoted as the first (according to the best reading) in Acts xiii. 33, where the words, "Thou art my son," etc. are cited as found *ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ ψαλμῷ*. In other mss., again, the two Psalms appear as one. And accordingly, Albertus Magnus says, "*Psalmus primus incipit a beatitudine et terminatur in beatitudine*," alluding to the "*Blessed is the man*," etc. i. 1, and "*Blessed are all*," etc. ii. 12. (So, too, the Jewish tradition, *Berachoth*, 9 b.) This last arrangement, however, is certainly wrong. There is no connection of subject between the two Psalms, and in style and character they are totally unlike.

As to date and author even tradition is silent; but the following considerations may lead us to a probable conclusion as to the time when the Psalm was composed. (1) It is earlier than the time of Jeremiah, for it is his habit to quote from, or allude to, earlier writers; and in xvii. 5-8, there is a manifest borrowing of the image employed in ver. 3 of this Psalm. (2) The word rendered "mockers," "scorners," ver. 1, occurs nowhere else in the whole Psalter, but is frequently applied in the earlier chapters of the Proverbs to those who set themselves to despise and scoff at religion. (See the definition of the word, Prov. xvi. 24.) This, and the sententious and somewhat proverbial form of the Psalm, might lead us even to ascribe it to Solomon himself. (3) The general doctrine of the poem, moreover, falls in with his reign, and with what may be gathered from the Proverbs as to the religious condition of the nation. It was a time when "wisdom uttered her voice," under the favor of power, and when the righteous were honored, whilst at the same time, as was sure to be the case in the midst of so much wealth and luxury, men disregarded the restraints of religion in their life (see Prov. i.-vii.), and even made an open scoff at its authority (i. 22). (4) The imagery of the Psalm is such as Solomon might naturally have employed. (See General Introduction, chap. iv. p. 61, note.) (5) If, as appears probable, Solomon made a collection of his father's poetry for the service of the Temple, he might have prefixed this Psalm by way of preface, and this circumstance would account for the absence of any inscription.

1 BLESSED is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of  
the wicked,  
Nor stood in the way of sinners,  
Nor sat in the seat of scorners;

1. BLESSED IS THE MAN, lit. "The blessedness (plur.) of the man," (cf. ii. 12; xli. 1 [2]). Not an exclamation, but the recognition of a fact. "The prophet seeing that such persons are few upon earth, breaks forth suddenly and says, *Blessed is the man.* — Luther. The structure of the verse is very exact, the parallelism in each member being carefully preserved; a kind of climax has also been noticed in the choice of expressions, Thus we have, first, three degrees of habit in the verbs "walked," "stood," "sat;" — next, three degrees of evil in

the character: the "wicked," described as the passionate, or restless (cf. Isa. lvii. 20; Job iii. 17); or perhaps, simply, as the unrighteous, the false; "the sinners," as the active habitual doers of iniquity (from the Piel form of the verb, Gen. xiii. 13); "the mockers" (Prov. xxi. 24), who make an open scoff, and blaspheme; lastly, three degrees of openness in the evil-doing: the "counsel" referring apparently, to hidden designs (cf. Job xxi. 16; xxii. 18; Jer. vii. 24); "the way" to public life; "the seat" (so the LXX, as in 1 Sam. xx. 18, 25),

- 2 But in the law of Jehovah (is) his delight,  
 And in his law doth he meditate<sup>a</sup> day and night.  
 3 So is he like a tree planted by streams of water,

or perhaps "assembly" (so the Syr., as cvii. 32; Jer. xv. 17), *consensus*, to a deliberate confederacy in wickedness. Calvin remarks: "Because it is difficult for us to separate ourselves altogether from the wicked with whom we are mixed up, the prophet heaps up his words (*verborum congerie utitur*), in order to increase the force of his exhortation." And again, in the order both of the nouns and verbs, he sees a warning, "how men are wont to turn aside little by little from the right way." Similarly Grot.: "Tres hic gradus describuntur male viventium, eorum qui incipiunt, eorum qui perstant, eorum qui plane jam in mala vita acquiescunt." Hupfeld, on the other hand, finds no climax in the three members of the verse, but regards them all as parallel and nearly equivalent expressions, merely poetic variations of the one thought, "Blessed is he who has no fellowship with the wicked in their doings," the parallelism being beautifully preserved by the use of three words to describe the wicked, three to describe their conduct, and three to denote intercourse and fellowship with them. So also Musculus gives the sense of the verse: "Beatum esse qui nec ullum, nec in ulla re, nec cum ullo reproborum hominum genere consortium habet."

2. In the former verse the righteous man is described negatively by that which he avoids, by that which he is not. Here his character is drawn on the positive side. And it is very remarkable that it should be summed up in the characteristic feature that he delights and meditates in the law of Jehovah. This again seems to point to quiet and peaceable times, when a man lived "under his own vine and his own fig-tree, none making him afraid." The law here meant is not so much divine revelation generally (as in Isa. i. 10, for instance) as the law of Moses — the *Book of the Law*, as is plain from the manifest allusion to Josh. i. 8. (See also Deut.

vi. 31; xi. 18–20; xvii. 19; Ps. xl. 7, 8 [8, 9].

HIS DELIGHT, the one word which describes the whole inner man, in striking contrast to the preceding amplification.

DOETH MEDITATE; a strict aorist, "is wont to meditate." The verb answers more nearly to the Latin *meditor* than any other word. Strictly, it means to utter any dull, confused sound, and hence it is employed of inward utterance — of the words a man speaks to himself; and also of giving open and loud expression to the thoughts. The emphasis laid on the law is noticeable. "Repetitur denuo nomen legis cui rei adeo carae ac pretiosae ejus vel solo nomine intime delectantur pii." — *Geier*. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that no merely outward observance of the law is here meant. The man described is one who "keeps it with the whole heart," who "delights in it after the inner man." The law here, moreover, is not to be taken in its most limited sense, as apart from the promise which accompanied it. The very expressions, "his *delight*," and "meditates in it *day and night*," show clearly enough that the law to such a man was more than a mere rule, after which he was to frame his outward life; that it was the food and aliment of his spirit.

3. So IS HE, or, "So shall he be." The preterite with the Vau either marks the consequence of his delight in the law, or introduces a kind of apodosis to verse 1, an expansion of the "blessed" there; in which case we may simply render, "*he shall be*," etc.

The figure which follows possessed, for an Eastern mind, a vividness of which we can form but a faint conception. When all else was parched and sterile, the "brooks of water" and the "torrent-beds" had their bright strip of verdure (1 Kings xviii. 5). There the grass was freshest and greenest, and there the trees flourished most luxuri-

That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,

And whose leaf also doth not wither :

And all that he doeth he maketh to prosper.<sup>b</sup>

4 Not so are the wicked ;

But (they are) like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous,

And the way of the wicked shall perish.

antly. (See the same figure used of outward prosperity, Job vii. 16, 17; Ezek. xix. 10, and also of the confidence and strength of the righteous, Psalm lii. 8 [10]; xcii. 12 [13]; Isa. xlv. 4; Jer. xvii. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 12).

STREAMS OF WATER, properly "lesser streams or brooks," so called from their dividing themselves (*ר. פל, dividere*) into different branches, and not artificial canals divided and distributed by human labor. (LXX, *διεξόδους*.) This is clear from other passages where the word, which is a poetical one, occurs (xlv. 4 [5]; lxxv. 9 [10], of the rain; Isa. xxx. 25).

AND ALL, etc. A transition from the figure of the tree, to the person who is compared to the tree. But, apparently, the verbs are chosen so as to carry on the metaphor; for both of them would refer to the tree as well as to the man. See Critical Note.

4. NOT SO. A simple but emphatic contrast. The LXX, Vulg., and Syr. have repeated these words; "Not so are the wicked, not so." The wicked perish even more utterly than the dry and withered tree. They are as "the chaff." Again, far more striking as an Eastern image than among ourselves. In Isa.

xvii. 13, "chaff of the mountains;" because the threshing-floors were usually on high, exposed spots, where the wind would sweep over them the more freely. (See the same figure, xxxv. 5; Job xxi. 18; Isa. xxix. 5; xli. 2; Hos. xiii. 3. Cf. Matt. iii. 12.)

5. THEREFORE, i.e. because they are in their very nature hollow, worthless, dry, bearing no fruit, etc.

IN THE JUDGMENT. Primarily no doubt referring to the general course of God's righteous judgments, with an allusion to the forms of a human tribunal; but reaching farther — to the final judgment. Chald., "in the great day." Rashi, "on the day of judgment."

CONGREGATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS, i.e. the true Israelites who are separated from the congregation of the evil-doers. (Cf. Ezek. xiii. 9.)

6. KNOWETH, i.e. regards with watchful care and love (xxx. 7; cxliv. 3; Job xxiii. 10). The participle denotes that this is the *character* of Jehovah.

THE WAY, i.e. as in verse 1, "the life, the whole course of action."

SHALL PERISH, must perish from its very nature in the righteous judgment of God.

<sup>a</sup> יִהְיֶה. "The *imperfect*," says Hupfeld, "used to express the *present*, whereas in ver. 1 *perfects* are employed; for in Hebrew, as in Arabic, both tenses are used for the present; not, however, quite arbitrarily, but with a nice distinction. Usually the *imperfect* is employed in general statements, in expressing what happens as a rule, without any definite mark of time, and when such statements include in a certain sense a



promise in themselves [so that they have a future character as well as a present]; *the perfect*, in definite assurances, in cases where a thing is supposed to have been in reality and for a long time existing, or when it stands in opposition to some consequence flowing therefrom; a distinction partly, it is true, depending on the time and character of the utterance, and therefore one of which the limits are not to be strictly defined. In this place it is clear there must be some reason for change of tense. Evidently the *negative* side of the righteous man's character, his decided aversion from evil, is regarded as an already accomplished fact, and therefore put in the perfect; the *positive* side, on the other hand, as that which is eternal (das ewige Moment), is put in the imperfect."

I would rather say, the perfect expresses the past resolve and conduct of which the effects still abide; the imperfect or aorist, the character as it presents itself at any moment, irrespective of all question of time.

<sup>b</sup> פָּרַח with עָשָׂה, Jer. xvii. 8, and צִלָּה, in like manner spoken of the growth of a tree (Ezek. xvii. 9, 10). It is uncertain whether the latter verb here is to be taken in its strict Hiph. signif., פָּל being the obj. "all that he doeth he maketh to prosper" (as Gen. xxxix. 3); or whether (as in E. V.) the Hiph. should be taken in its neuter sense, פָּל being the subject, "whatsoever he doeth, prospereth." Both constructions are equally admissible.

## PSALM II.

THIS Psalm, like the last, is without any inscription; and it is probably owing to this circumstance that in some MSS. the two Psalms are found written as one. No two Psalms can possibly be more unlike in style and subject; and, therefore, it was not on any ground of internal connection that they were thus joined together. The first suggests, as we have seen, a time of profound peace. This rings with the tramp of gathering armies, and notes of lofty challenge addressed by the poet to the invaders of his country. It must have been written at a time when Jerusalem was threatened by a confederacy of hostile powers; and, perhaps, on the accession of a new monarch, the youth and inexperience of the king or the defenceless state of the kingdom having led them to anticipate an easy triumph.

It is plain from the language which the poet puts into their mouth,—"Let us break their bonds asunder," etc.—that the allies were vassal

or tributary monarchs, who, having either been subdued in former wars, or having in some other way tendered their allegiance, had seized this opportunity to assert their independence. We may suppose the song to have been written when the news of their approach reached Jerusalem. The poet encourages his countrymen by reminding them of the covenant made with David's house, and predicts for their enemies a disastrous overthrow. Their enterprise is in its very nature "a vain thing." It cannot but come to naught, because the king whom they would dethrone is the son and vicegerent of Jehovah himself. The poet therefore counsels the rebels to return to their allegiance before it be too late.

It is quite impossible now to say what the event was which occasioned this poem. The older interpreters (especially the Jewish) referred it to David, and the attacks made upon him by the Philistines (2 Sam. v.). Others, again (Ewald, Bleek), suppose Solomon to be the king spoken of. But we hear of no gathering of hostile nations during any part of Solomon's reign, and the words of the poet are too large to apply to the weak attempt of the Philistines on David's accession. It would be better to connect the Psalm with the events mentioned in 2 Sam. x. There we find a confederacy of Syrians, Ammonites, and others, who had formerly been subdued (2 Sam. vii. 3, 12), and who were now making a last effort for their independence. Just before this, too (vii. 14), we have the promise to which allusion seems to be made in verse 7 of the Psalm.

Others (as Delitzsch) have found the groundwork of the poem in events connected with the earlier part of the reign of Ahaz. That monarch was threatened by the combined forces of Rezin and Pekah. And behind these, in the distant background, but visible to the eye of the prophet, was the huge power of Assyria, which was destined to work such fearful ravages in Judea. It was to Ahaz, moreover, that at this crisis was given that very remarkable promise of deliverance which is recorded in the seventh chapter of Isaiah. In its general character, indeed, there is a considerable affinity between this Psalm and that part of the prophecy of Isaiah which speaks of Immanuel and Assyria. There, in like manner, the powers of the world are seen gathered against the house of David: and there a like challenge is given,—"Associate yourselves and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves and be broken in pieces; for God is with us." The objection to this view is, that Rezin and Pekah were not vassals, and did not *rebel*.

But though the poem was occasioned by some national event, we must not confine its application to that event; nor need we even suppose that the singer himself did not feel that his words went beyond their

first occasion. He begins to speak of an earthly king, and his wars with the nations of the earth; but his words are too great to have all their meaning exhausted in David, or Solomon, or Ahaz, or any Jewish monarch. Or ever he is aware, the local and the temporal are swallowed up in the universal and the eternal. The king who sits on David's throne has become glorified and transfigured in the light of the promise. The picture is half ideal, half actual. It concerns itself with the present, but with that only so far as it is typical of greater things to come. The true King, who to the prophet's mind is to fulfil all his largest hopes, has taken the place of the visible and earthly king. The nations are not merely those who are now mustering for the battle, but whatsoever opposeth and exalteth itself against Jehovah and his Anointed.

Hence this Psalm is of the nature of a prophecy, and still waits for its final accomplishment. It had a real fulfilment, no doubt, in the banding together of Herod and Pontius Pilate against Christ (Acts iv. 25-27). But this was not a literal one. Pontius Pilate was not a king; nor was it the heathen nations (גוים), but the Jews, who were the chief enemies of Christ when he appeared on earth. "Ye," says Peter, addressing the Jews, "have with wicked hands slain the Lord of Glory." Only, therefore, in a partial sense,—rather, perhaps, in the way of application than anything else,—did the words of this Psalm correspond to that event. But it may be said to have an ever-repeated fulfilment in the history of the church, which is a history of God's kingdom upon earth—a kingdom which in all ages has the powers of the world arrayed against it, and in all ages with the same disastrous result to those who have risen "against the Lord, and against his Anointed." And so it shall be to the end, when, perhaps, that hostility will be manifested in some yet deadlier form, only to be overthrown forever, that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.

That the Messianic interpretation of this Psalm was the earliest, is admitted by the Jews themselves. Kimchi says: "Some interpret this Psalm of Gog and Magog, and 'the Anointed' is King Messiah; and so our Rabbis of blessed memory have expounded it; and the Psalm so expounded is clear; but it is more natural to suppose that David spake it concerning himself, as we have interpreted." R. Sol. Isaki (Rashi) makes the same statement as to the ancient interpretation, but, with remarkable candor, adds: "In order, however, to keep to the literal sense, and that we may be able to answer the heretics (i.e. Christians), it is better to explain it of David himself, with reference to what is said 2 Sam. v. 17."

See Pococke, *Porta Mosis*, p. 306, etc.; and the remarkable passage from the Midrash Tehillim, quoted by Raymundus Martinus, *Pug. Fid.* p. 527.

In form, the Psalm is dramatic, the action being carried on by different speakers, who successively take their parts. It consists of four strophes:

I. The singer sees with astonishment the nations gathering together, and their princes conspiring to cast off the yoke of Jehovah and his Anointed (ver. 1-3).

II. Jehovah, sitting throned in heaven, mocks their designs and confounds them with his word (ver. 4-6).

III. The anointed king announces the divine decree by which he rules, which assures him of victory in the struggle, and of boundless dominion (ver. 7-9).

IV. The poet, in consequence of what he has seen, counsels the rebellious monarchs to submit themselves to the sway of their lawful sovereign (ver. 10-12).

- 1 WHY have nations raged tumultuously,  
And (why do) peoples meditate a vain thing?
- 2 Kings of the earth set themselves up,  
And princes have taken counsel together  
Against Jehovah and against his Anointed:—

1. WHY—a question at once of wonder and horror. Looking with amazement on the gathering stir and tumult of the rebellion, nations in the full tide of insurrection, kings and princes placing themselves at the head of it, the loyal heart breaks forth with the question, Why this attempt to throw off the yoke of the true King? It is not a tyrant against whom they are leagued. It is Jehovah himself who is assailed in the person of the king whom he has set on the throne. Such an enterprise cannot but fail. In its very nature it is “a vain thing.” In this word, says Luther, is comprised the argument of nearly the whole Psalm. How can they succeed who set themselves against Jehovah and against his Christ? The abrupt question is in the true spirit of lyric poetry. So Horace, gazing with horror on the spectacle of civil strife,

breaks forth: “Quo, quo scelesti ruitis? aut cur dexteris, Aptanturenses conditi?”

Why HAVE (pret.) they gathered tumultuously (Aq., ἐθορυβήθησαν; LXX, ἐφράξαν, cf. Acts iv. 25), i.e. *What is the reason* of their attempt? and why do they imagine (pres.), i.e. *what is the design*, the object, they have before them? So Delitzsch explains (and I think rightly) the difference of tense in the two clauses.

A VAIN THING, lit. “vanity.” The verb “meditate” is the same as in i. 2, where see note.

2. SET THEMSELVES—of assuming deliberately a hostile attitude, as of Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 16; of the angel who meets Balaam, Num. xxii. 22. This verb is in the *present*; for the singer sees, as it were, their hostile array before his eyes. The next is again in the *past*, “they have banded themselves,” the conspiracy and



- 3 "Let us break their bonds asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us."  
4 He that is throned in the heaven laughs :  
The Lord hath them in derision :  
5 Then shall he speak to them in his wrath,  
And in his sore displeasure terrify them :

confederacy having preceded the mustering of their hosts to the battle.

After the double parallelism with which the Psalm opens, there comes the single line which, in its majestic simplicity, at once reveals the design, and the hopelessness of the design : "Against Jehovah and against his Anointed." There is a very remarkable comment on these words in the *Mechilta*, quoted in the *Yalkut Shimeoni* (ii. f. 90, 1 Sch. p. 227) : "Like a robber who was standing and expressing his contempt behind the palace of the king, and saying, If I find the son of the king, I will seize him, and kill him, and crucify him, and put him to a terrible death ; but the Holy Spirit mocks at it, and saith : He that dwelleth in heaven laughs."

Luther bids us observe how consolatory this truth is to the militant church. For the rage of our enemies is not aimed at us, but at the Lord and his Christ. They can only reach us through him. "*Sed ideo quoque sic ordinat verba ut pro nostra consolatione et exhortatione discamus, nunquam nos pati injuriam, quin prior et magis offendatur Deus quam nos, et tantam esse super nos Dei Patris curam, ut ante sentiat, indigniusque ferat nostram injuriam quam nos ipsi,*" etc.

3. But the singer not only sees the gathering host ; he hears their menace of rebellion : "Let us burst their bonds asunder" (*i.e.* those of Jehovah and his Christ), etc. The metaphor is borrowed from restive animals which break the cords, and throw off the yoke. Cf. Isa. lviii. 6 ; x. 27. The phrase occurs again, cvii. 14, and often in Jeremiah. "*Legem Christi,*" says Luther, "*quae libertatis et suavitatis est, vincula et jugum apellant, servitutem et difficultatem arbi-*

*trati, rursus suam legem quae vera est servitus et infirmitas libertatem et facilitatem esse credunt.*"

4-6. And now from all this wild tempest of confusion upon earth, from the trampling of gathering armies, and the pride of kingly captains, and their words of haughty menace, the poet turns his eye to heaven. There, on his everlasting throne, sits the Almighty King, in whose sight all nations and kings are but as a drop of the bucket. Luther, in his characteristic way, seizing on the eternal truth of the words, reminds us that "What is here written touching Christ, is an example for all Christians. For any man who sincerely desires to be a Christian, especially if, moreover, he be a teacher of the word, will have his Herods and Pilates, his princes, kings, nations, and people raging against him, meditating a vain thing, setting themselves up, and gathering together. And if men do not so trouble him, devils will, and finally his own conscience, at any rate when he comes to die. Then will he find it needful to remember this and such-like consolation, 'He that dwelleth in the heavens,' etc. and in this hope to stand firm, and on no account to give way." There is something very awful in the representation here given of God. First, as if in calm contempt, "he laughs" ; then there is the bitter derision which, in its effects, brings their counsels to nought, and baffles their purposes, "he mocks them:" lastly, with the thunder of his word he discomfits them. THEN, at last ; that is, after long patience, in the moment of their godless security, when their end seems almost gained.

5. The change in the rhythm of the original is worthy of notice ; it becomes

6 "But *I* have set<sup>a</sup> my King —  
On Zion, my holy mountain."

7 I will tell<sup>b</sup> of a decree ;

Jehovah said unto me : "Thou art my Son,  
*I* have this day begotten thee :"

8 Ask of me, and I will give thee nations for thine inheritance,  
And for thy possession the ends of the earth.

full and sonorous, "donnerartig," as Delitzsch calls it, rolling like the thunder, and is rendered the more effective by its contrast with the quiet manner of verse 4.

6. As the first strophe closed with the words of the rebels, so this with the words of Jehovah.

And in the words BUT I we have the central truth of the Psalm. The "but" is to be explained as referring to an unexpressed "ye may plot," or some thought of the kind, in the mind of the speaker. It is God's own answer to them that oppose him. I (the pronoun is emphatic in the Hebrew), the King of heaven and earth, have set my own king, my son and my vicegerent, on the throne. (Cf. 1 Sam. xvi. 1.)

ON ZION, not the place where the king was anointed, for that would hold neither of type (whether David or Solomon) nor of antitype ; but as the seat of dominion, the centre from which his law goes forth, etc. Cf. cx. 2 ; and in the fact that his throne is on "the holy mountain," there is a kind of anticipative hint of the great truth which is first distinctly taught in the 110th Psalm, that the Anointed King should also be the Anointed Priest.

7. A sudden change of speakers takes place. The Son, the Anointed King, appears, and proclaims the Father's counsel concerning him. He has received of Jehovah a decree — the new law of his kingdom. He reigns not by the will of man, but by the grace of God ; not by right only as the Son of Jehovah, but by covenant and promise likewise. (See the stress laid on this divine calling as fulfilled in Christ in Heb. v. 5.) This

is true of the type in a primary sense, 2 Sam. vii. 14, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (with which compare Ps. lxxxix. 26 [27], "He shall call me, Thou art my Father," etc.). But the emphatic, "this day have I begotten thee," is true in its highest sense only of him whom the Father sanctified, and sent into the world. (Compare the argument in Heb. i. 5.)

The expression, "I this day have begotten thee," can only mean, This day have I declared and manifested thee to be my Son, by investing thee with thy kingly dignity, and placing thee on thy throne. St. Paul teaches us to see the fulfilment of these words in Christ's resurrection from the dead. It was by *that* that he was declared to be (marked out as, in a distinct and peculiar sense, *ὁρισθέντος*) the Son of God. (Rom. i. 4 ; cf. Acts xiii. 33.) The day of Christ's coronation was the day of his resurrection. From henceforth he sits at the right hand of the Father, waiting till his enemies be made his footstool.

8. ASK OF ME, AND I WILL GIVE THEE. A poetical figure, by which is represented God's willingness to give to his Anointed the kingdoms of the world. The Father's love will withhold nothing from the Son. The iron sceptre is not only the symbol of an older and sterner dispensation. The Saviour is also the Judge. Even at his first coming it was said of him, "whose fan is in his hand," etc., and he himself declared, "for judgment am I come into this world." And in the Apocalypse he appears as the King who makes war, and who should rule all nations with a rod of iron, chap. xix. 15 and xii. 5, and especially chap.

- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron :  
Like a potter's vessel shalt thou dash them in pieces.”
- 10 And now, ye kings, learn wisdom !  
Receive instruction, ye judges of the earth !
- 11 Serve Jehovah with fear,  
And exult<sup>a</sup> with trembling !
- 12 Kiss the Son,<sup>e</sup> lest he be angry,  
And ye perish in (your) way ;  
For soon<sup>f</sup> is his wrath kindled :  
Blessed are all they that find refuge in him !

ii. 27, where he gives a share in this his power and prerogative to all his true and faithful soldiers.

10-12. Finally, the poet who has heard the words of Jehovah, and the words of his Anointed, seeks by wise counsel to dissuade the rebels from their mad enterprise.

10. AND NOW, drawing a conclusion from what precedes (Prov. v. 7 ; Isa. xxviii. 22 ; cf. καὶ νῦν, 1 John ii. 28).

JUDGES OF THE EARTH, as in ver. 2, “kings of the earth,” who had placed themselves at the head of the insurrection.

LEARN WISDOM . . . RECEIVE INSTRUCTION. Submit yourselves ; not only in a political sense, but also in a religious sense, — become his true worshippers. In the Jewish mind the two ideas would never be dissociated.

12. KISS THE SON, i.e. Do homage to him : see 1 Sam. x. 1 ; cf. 1 Kings xix.

18 ; Hos. xiii. 2 ; Job xxxi. 27. **LEST HE BE ANGRY.** Who ? Not necessarily the Son. The subject of the verb may be Jehovah. Do homage to the Son (or proffer pure homage), lest he (i.e. Jehovah) be angry. And so afterwards, “Blessed are all they that find refuge in him,” i.e. in Jehovah. Still, there can be no objection to taking “the Son” as the subject.

It should be observed that two of the names given by the Jews themselves to the Hope of Israel were taken from this Psalm (and Dan. ix. 25), the Messiah, ver. 2, and the Son of God, ver. 7. Nathanael says to Jesus, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, John i. 49, and both names are joined together by the high priest, Matt. xxvi. 63, εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. In like manner the name ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is taken from Ps. viii. 4 and Dan. vii. 13.

<sup>a</sup> נִסְּחָתִי Gesen. (*Thes.*) and Ew. (*in loc.*) render, “I have anointed,” and this rendering is apparently supported both by the מְשִׁיחַ going before, and also by the derivative נִסְּחָה, “a prince.” But the verb nowhere else occurs in this sense ; it means “to pour out,” and then “to pour metals in a state of fusion into a mould” ; hence it passes over into the meaning of *setting fast, establishing*, etc. So the Niph. Prov. viii. 23, and hence נִסְּחָה means not “one anointed,” but “one appointed” to his office.

<sup>b</sup> אֲסַפְּרָה. The optat. form, “let me tell,” or “I would fain tell.” For the construction with אָל, see lxix. 27, similarly with אָמַר, Gen. xx. 2 ; Jer. xxvii. 19, and הִבֵּר, Job xlii. 7. חָק in like manner without

the art. Isa. xxiv. 5. In the Cod. Succah. cap. 5, fol. 52, the words are explained, "I will tell it for a decree, i.e., that it may be a statute, that the Messiah, the true Son of David, will certainly come."

יִלְדֵּיתִיָּהּ (instead of יִלְדֵּיתִיָּהּ). According to Gesen. from a form יִלְדֵּי, as שָׁאֲלֵתִי, 1 Sam. i. 20, from שָׁאֵל. (Gram. § 44, 2, Rem. 2.) But Hupf., who says truly that there is no trace of such a form in Hebrew, thinks that י instead of א is to be explained by the throwing forward of the tone, and compares the Hiph. הִמְתִּירָהּ, where the tone is thrown forward, with הִמְתָּהּ, where the א remains, because the place of the tone is not altered.

אֲיִלֵּהּ, generally rendered "fear" or "tremble," because of the following בְּרִצְדָּהּ, as if connected with יָגֵר, with the former of which, indeed, it is found parallel, Hos. x. 5. The LXX, however, ἀγαλλιᾷσθε αὐτῇ ἐν τρόμῳ. And this is the usual meaning of the verb. Nor is there any reason for departing from it here. "Rejoice" that ye are called to worship Jehovah; but rejoice with awe and holy fear. The older versions generally paraphrase the word. Thus the Chald., "pray"; Syr., "cleave to him"; Arab., "praise him."

נִשְׁקִיבֵר. The interpretation of these words has always been a difficulty. (1) The Chald. has קְבִילוּ אִלְפָנָא, "receive instruction"; LXX, δράσασθε παιδείας; Vulg., *apprehendite disciplinam*; בר being thus, as in Arabic, "piety, obedience," etc. (2) Others have taken it as an adverb; Jerome (in his text), *Adorate pure*; Aq., καταφιλήσατε ἐκλεκτῶς; Symm., προσκυνήσατε καθαρῶς. (3) Others, again, "the chosen one" (from בָּרַר) without the article, as מְלִיכָה, xxi. 1. (4) Of the older versions, only the Syriac has لَمَسَ سَنًا, "kiss the Son." Jerome however, in his commentary, admits this as an alternative rendering. After observing, that he rendered the verb נִשְׁקִי by *adore*, "worship," because they who worship are wont to kiss the hand and bow the head (and quoting Job xxxi. 27 in proof), and after insisting on the ambiguity of the noun, which he says means not only "son," as in Barjona, etc., but also "wheat," and "a bundle of ears of wheat," and "elect," and "pure," he thus defends himself from the charge of inconsistency: "In my little commentary, where there was an opportunity of discussing the matter, I had said *Adorate filium*, [but] in the body of the work [the translation], not to appear a violent interpreter, and not to give occasion to Jewish calumny, I said *Adorate pure sive electe*, as Aquila and Symmachus had translated." — *Adv. Ruff.* lib. i. Among the Jewish commentators, Aben-Ezra and Maimon. (quoted in Benzev), who both refer to the בָּרַר above, render "son." So also Mendelss. "dem Sohne huldiget"; and so Gesen. and DeWette, who cannot be accused of any dog-



matic bias in favor of their interpretation. The only objection to this, of any weight, is the Aram. form of the word בָּר, which occurs (except in the Chaldee of Daniel and Ezra) but once again, Prov. xxxi. 2, manifestly a later passage, and not free from other Chaldaisms. But to this it may be replied, with Dr. Pusey (*Daniel*, p. 477), that the form *Bar* is in fact not Chaldee, but old Phenician. Hupf. indeed alleges, besides, the absence of the article, and the change of subject in the following verse. The former, however, may be explained by poetic usage, and the latter is not uncommon in Hebrew. According to Delitzsch, an Arabic grammarian would explain the absence of the article as equivalent to saying: "Kiss a Son, and what a Son!" (Cf. Heb. i. 1, ἐν Υἱῷ, "by a Son, not by any inferior being;" and בְּבָרָךְ, Ps. xlv. 2.)

It will be seen from the above renderings, that the verb has been taken in two different senses: (1) "to cleave, adhere to, lay hold of," etc. — a sense which is not supported by usage; and (2) "to kiss," i.e. according to the Eastern custom, to proffer homage and service. (Cf. 1 Sam. x. 1). Gen. xli. 40 is probably to be explained in the same way (see Gesen. *Thes.* p. 923). The word is also used of the worship paid to idols, 1 Kings xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2. We must therefore either render, with the Syr., "Do homage to the Son," or with Jerome, "proffer pure homage, worship in purity." Both translations are admissible. Nor does it seem very important which we adopt, though the interpretation of this clause has sometimes been debated, as if with it fell or stood the Messianic character of the Psalm. But that must be determined by the general scope of the Psalm, not by a single phrase; not to mention that verses 6, 7, are quite as emphatic as verse 12.

<sup>f</sup> בְּמִצֵּט, either (1) "within a little," "almost," "all but," = *parum abest quin*, often with the perf. *parum aberat quin*, but also, as here, with the pres. 2 Sam. xix. 37; or (2) "quickly," "soon." Hupf. doubts this, but besides Job xxxii. 22 and Ps. lxxxi. 15, which admit this meaning better than the other, the phrase בְּמִצֵּט רָגַע, Isa. xxvi. 20, is decisive that בְּמִצֵּט may be used of *time*; and so it is best understood here.

### PSALM III.

THIS and the following Psalm have several links of connection, are in the same strain of thought and feeling, and were probably composed under the same circumstances. From the inscription of this Psalm we learn what those circumstances were. It was written by David, when

he fled from his son Absalom. Both Psalms, it has been conjectured, were composed on the same day; the one in the morning, the other in the evening, of the day following that on which the king quitted Jerusalem. It has been urged, indeed, against this view, that there is an absence of all allusion to Absalom, that the language is of the same general kind as that employed in the other Psalms where the writer is surrounded by enemies, and that there is nothing to indicate that the author is a person of importance, much less a king. But we rarely find in any Psalm those clearly defined notes of time and those distinct personal allusions which lead us to connect it with one event, rather than another. We need not, therefore, assume, on this ground, that the inscription is false. The titles may preserve a genuine ancient tradition, unless there be anything in the language of a Psalm which directly contravenes them; and there is certainly no word here which would warrant us in rejecting the inscription. The absence of any allusion to Absalom may be accounted for, in some measure, at least, by the tender feeling of the father for his rebellious son. Or his mind may not have been suffered to dwell on so harassing a thought, in order that he might trust the more entirely in God as to the issue of the struggle. Even the recollection of his past sin, grievous as it was, and though he was now reaping the fruits of it, was not allowed to trouble him. His soul is at rest in the sense of God's forgiveness. The words are the words of one who had often sought and found help from God (iii. 4; iv. 3); and who, even in this his sorest strait, calmly reposes, knowing that Jehovah is his glory and the lifter-up of his head.

From ver. 5 we gather that the Psalm is, as has been said, a morning hymn. With returning day there comes back on the monarch's heart the recollection of the enemies who threaten him—a nation up in arms against him, his own son heading the rebellion, his wisest and most trusted counsellor in the ranks of his foes (2 Sam. xv.–xvii.). Never, not even when hunted by Saul, had he found his position one of greater danger. The odds were overwhelmingly against him. This is a fact which he does not attempt to hide from himself: “How *many* are mine enemies”; “*Many* rise up against me”; “*Many* say to my soul”; “*Ten thousands* of the people have set themselves against me.” Meanwhile where are his friends, his army, his counsellors? Not a word of allusion to any of them in the Psalm. Yet he is not crushed; he is not desponding. Enemies may be thick as the leaves of the forest, and earthly friends may be few, or uncertain, or far off. But there is one Friend who cannot fail him, and to him David turns with a confidence and affection which lift him above all his fears. Never had he

been more sensible of the reality and preciousness of the divine protection. If he was surrounded by enemies, Jehovah was his shield. If Shimei and his crew turned his glory into shame, Jehovah was his glory; if they sought to revile and degrade him, Jehovah was the lifter-up of his head. Nor did the mere fact of distance from Jerusalem separate between him and his God. He had sent back the ark and the priests; for he would not endanger their safety, and he did not trust in them as a charm, and he knew that Jehovah could still hear him from "his holy mountain" (iii. 4), could still lift up the light of his countenance upon him, and put gladness in his heart (iv. 6, 7). Sustained by Jehovah, he had laid him down and slept in safety; trusting in the same mighty protection, he would lie down again to rest. Enemies might taunt (iii. 2), and friends might fail him; but the victory was Jehovah's, and he could break the teeth of the ungodly (iii. 7, 8).<sup>1</sup>

The Psalm may be divided into four strophes:

I. The present danger and distress (ver. 1, 2).

II. The recollection of mercy and help in times past (ver. 3, 4).

III. As arising from this, the sense of peace and security even in the midst of the present danger (ver. 5, 6).

IV. The prayer for help against enemies, and for blessings upon Israel (ver. 7, 8).

[A Psalm of David, when he fled from the face of his son Absalom].

1 JEHOVAH, how many are mine adversaries,

Many (are they that) rise up against me!

2 Many (there be that) say to my soul:

"There is no help<sup>a</sup> for him in God." [Selah.]

1. HOW MANY, etc.: nearly all Israel. Comp. 2 Sam. xvi. 15 and xvii. 1, 11-13 with xv. 18.

THAT RISE AGAINST ME. The very expression used twice by the Cushite who brings tidings to David of the death of Absalom, and the defeat of the rebels. (2 Sam. xviii. 31, 32.)

2. TO MY SOUL, rather than "OF MY soul," though this is implied; but they aim at, and strike to, his soul. He *feels* it, and feels how deadly the aim is. "My soul" here is not a mere periphrasis for

the personal pronoun, any more than in xxxv. 3: "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."

NO HELP FOR HIM, i.e. God as well as man is against him, his destruction is certain, prayer itself will be of no avail. Hence the general name of God (Elohim) instead of Jehovah, which otherwise is characteristic of the Psalm. David was thinking perhaps of what Shimei had said: "The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and

<sup>1</sup> In a very interesting paper on "The Revolt of Absalom" in *Good Words for March*, 1864, Mr. Plumptre has taken a similar view of these Psalms.

- 3 But THOU, O Jehovah, art a shield about me ;  
     My glory and the lifter-up of my head.
- 4 With my voice <sup>b</sup> to Jehovah do I cry,  
     And he answereth me from his holy mountain. [Selah.]
- 5 I laid me down, and slept ;  
     I awaked, for Jehovah sustaineth me.
- 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people  
     Which have set (themselves) against me round about.
- 7 Arise, O Jehovah ! Help me, O my God !  
     For thou hast smitten all mine enemies (on) the cheek-bone ;  
     Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son" (2 Sam. xvi. 8). This however is the common scoff of the ungodly, as they mock the trust of the righteous : xxii. 7, 8 [8, 9] ; xlii. 3 [4], 9 [10]. And not only enemies thus reproached, but friends seemed to despair. See on iv. 6.

3. BUT THOU. Emphatically opposed to all such assertions as that in verse 2.

A SHIELD. Such God had declared himself to be to Abraham in Gen. xv. 1, and that, it should be remembered, just after Abraham had returned from the battle with the kings. We cannot wonder that such a name of God should have had a peculiar preciousness for David. No man was ever harder pressed by enemies, and no man had ever more cause to rejoice in the thought that God was his shield.

MY GLORY AND LIFTER-UP, etc. ; primarily, perhaps, with reference to the kingly dignity which God had given him, but not to be confined to that, but to deliverance out of trouble, exaltation, etc. (Cf. xxvii. 5, 6 ; cx. 7.)

4. Expresses not a single act, but the habit of a life. Whenever I cry, God hears me from his holy hill, i.e. Zion, where was the ark of the covenant.

The priests and Levites, when he left Jerusalem, would have carried the ark after him. But with that faith which can alone teach true resignation, he says, "Carry back the ark of God into the

city ; if I shall find favor in the eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation." To David the ark was no mere talisman. The presence and favor of Jehovah were not bound to the local symbol of his presence. 'In the heart, not in the hands,' was David's feeling. It was the very opposite of that superstitious impulse which led the Israelites to take the ark with them into battle, 1 Sam. iv. 3-6. (2 Sam. xv. 25.)

5. I LAID ME DOWN. The pronoun is emphatic, as if he would say, "I, my very self, hunted and cursed by my enemies, have tasted the goodness of the Lord even in the night that is past."

The tenses require the rendering as given above. I laid me down—I went to sleep—I woke up again—for Jehovah sustaineth me (an aorist, as "I cry," in the last verse) ; his hand is my pillow.

6. Then from that thought there arose fresh confidence in his heart, "I will not be afraid of countless hosts," etc.

HAVE SET THEMSELVES. A military expression. (Cf. Isa. xxii. 7 ; 1 Kings xx. 12, etc.) It is not necessary to supply an accusative such as "camp" or "battle." The word may be used intransitively.

7. FOR THOU HAST SMITTEN. An appeal to the past : O thou that hast destroyed mine enemies on every side, ALL mine enemies, be they many, or be they few, rise up now for me against



## 8 To Jehovah belongeth the victory.

Let thy blessing be upon thy people. [Selah.]

them that rise up against me. Or possibly, as in many other instances the perfects may anticipate the result, they express the sure confidence that God *will* crush his enemies, which he speaks of as an already accomplished fact.

It is impossible not to feel how appropriate this metaphor,—smiting on the cheek-bone, breaking the teeth, etc.—is in David's mouth. As he himself had smitten the bear and the lion when they came against him, so should God smite his enemies coming fierce and open-mouthed against him.

8. THE VICTORY, or "THE help." The article is emphatic, and includes help and deliverance in all its fulness, as the preposition denotes that it belongs exclusively to, is at the entire disposal of, Jehovah.

Such is his confident, courageous

answer to the timorous whispers of friends, and the mocking exultation of enemies. They said, "There is no help for him in God." He replies, To Jehovah belongeth help, help not in this strait only, but in all times and places.

Finally, how noble the prayer of the royal exile, asking not for himself alone, but for his poor, misguided subjects—"Let thy blessing be upon thy people," upon the whole nation, of whom David is the father, as he is the king, not merely that portion of his subjects who remained true in their allegiance. What a glimpse this gives us of the greatness and generosity of that kingly heart! He is the type, as Delitzsch observes, of the true David who prayed for the people who crucified him, "Father, forgive them."

THY BLESSING. "Benedictio Dei est Dei beneficentia."

<sup>a</sup> On the form רְשׁוּתָהּ, Hupfeld's note should be consulted. He maintains that the termination הַ, by which the original form (רְשׁוּתָהּ) is lengthened, is a remnant of the old accusative termination, and in words of this kind denotes the accus. of purpose or aim; strictly, therefore, Lat. *saluti*, as נְצֻחָהּ, *auxilio*, xlv. 27; lxiii. 8; xciv. 17, = לְנֻחָהּ, and הָלִיזָהּ לָהּ = *religioni tibi sit*. And so also in lxxx. 3, לְנֻחָהּ, where, however, the accus. is rendered superfluous by the prep. לְ, as often (e.g. לְנֻחָהּ, לְשָׁאֵלָהּ, בְּנֻחָהּ, etc.), the signification of the termination having been lost. The following dative לִי points to the same construction here; but in consequence of the בָּא, *in God*, the termination goes for nothing, and the noun is used as a nominative, as in John ii. 10, and similar forms elsewhere.

<sup>b</sup> קוּלִי אֶקְרָא. According to Hupfeld a double subject of the person, and the active member or instrument, as often in the poets, xii. 3; xvii. 10, 13, 14; xxxii. 8; xlv. 3, etc.; and even in prose, Ex. vi. 3; 1 Sam. xxv. 26, 33. Gesen., on the other hand, assumes an accus. of the instrument (§ 135, i. R. 3), quoting such passages as cix. 2; Gen. xxvii. 34; Ezek. xi. 13, on which Hupfeld remarks that in all these instances not only is there no pronominal suffix, but the noun stands with an adjective which describes the *manner* of the action, as elsewhere the *inf. absol.* or an *abstract* alone, whereas here we have a *concrete*. On "selah," see the General Introduction.

## PSALM IV.

DAVID had said in the previous Psalm, "I laid me down and slept"; he says in this, "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep." These words evidently connect the Psalms together. That was a morning, this is an evening, hymn. That was written with a deep sense of thankfulness for the undisturbed rest which had followed the most anxious, in some respects the dreariest, day of his life; this was written with a calm confidence, flowing directly from the previous experience. The interval between the two Psalms may only have been the interval between the morning and evening of the same day. The thoughts and turns of expression in the one are not unlike those in the other. As in the former he heard many saying to his soul, "There is no help for him in God" (ver. 2), so in this he hears many saying, "Who will show us any good?" (ver. 6). As in that he knew that, though at a distance from the tabernacle, he was not at a distance from God, but would receive an answer to his prayer from the "holy mountain" (ver. 4), so in this, though the priests have returned with the ark to Jerusalem, he can look for "the light of Jehovah's countenance," which is better than the *urim* and *thummim* of the priestly ephod.

The Psalm opens with a short prayer, in which David's faith stays itself on his experience of past mercies. Then his thoughts run upon his enemies, on the curses of Shimei, on the treachery of Ahithophel. "Oh, ye sons of men,"—thus he turns to address them, and the expression denotes persons of rank and importance,—“how long will ye turn my glory into shame?” How long will ye trample my honor as a king in the dust, refusing me the allegiance which is my due? How long will ye love vanity (or emptiness), and seek after lies? How is it that ye are bent on this mad enterprise, and persist in using the weapons of falsehood and slander to my prejudice? He reminds them that, in assailing him, they are assailing not him, but God, who chose him and appointed him to his office (ver. 3). “For them, if his words could reach them, as they were lying down to rest in the pride of their successful plots, his counsel would be, ‘Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.’ Let the watches of the night be given to self-searching; let the voice of scorn and reviling be hushed in silence. Then, when that scrutiny and solemn awe have done their work, and repentance comes, ‘offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.’”<sup>1</sup> Once

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Plumptre's paper on "The Revolt of Absalom" in *Good Words* for March, 1864, p. 271.

more David, ere he lies down to rest, lifts his eyes to heaven. Many, in such circumstances, might be ready to despair; many, probably, among his own friends, were then saying, "Who will show us any good?" David knows where true good is to be found. There is a light which can "lighten his darkness," whether it be the darkness of night or the darkness of sorrow. The light of God's countenance lifted up upon him can fill his heart with greater joy than the joy of the threshing-floor or the vintage. And in that confidence he can lie down and take his rest, knowing that Jehovah himself will keep him in the watches of the night.

It is worthy of notice that David does not cry to God for vengeance on his enemies, but earnestly seeks to bring them to a better mind. The strong feeling of injured innocence prompts no thought of revenge, but only the noble desire to teach those who have done the wrong a more excellent way. The monarch does not forget that he is a monarch; and with a monarch's heart, lifted, here at least, above the littleness of personal resentment, he tries to win over the subjects who have rebelled against him.

The Psalm may be said to fall into three unequal strophes:

I. The cry directed to God (ver. 1).

II. The earnest warning addressed to his enemies, in two parts (ver. 2-5).

III. The calm expression, on the part of David, of his peace and confidence in God (ver. 6-8).

[For the Precentor. With Stringed Instruments.\* A Psalm of David].

1. WHEN I cry, answer me, O God of my righteousness!

Thou (that) in straitness hast made room for me:

Be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer.

1. GOD OF MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, i.e. thou who maintainest my right and my cause, asserting my righteousness against the slanders of my enemies. (Cf. lix. 10 [11].) But not to be confined to this: it also means who knowest the righteousness, the sincerity of my heart and life; and, moreover, art thyself the ground and source of all righteousness in me. So Leighton: "Qui ipse justus es et justitiae meae patronus. *Justitiae*

*meae*, id est, justae tum causae, tum vitae."

The second clause of this verse is undoubtedly a relative clause, with the usual omission of the relative. It is certainly not to be taken (with DeWette) as imperative. On these two things he builds his plea, God's righteousness as pledged to himself, and God's goodness, as experienced either in past times, or in the present emergency.

2 Ye sons of men! how long shall my glory be (turned)<sup>b</sup> to shame?

(How long) will ye love emptiness, will ye seek after lies? [Selah.]

3 Know then, that Jehovah hath separated<sup>c</sup> for himself one whom he loves.<sup>d</sup>

Jehovah hearkeneth when I cry unto him.

4 Tremble, and sin not:

Commune with your heart, on your bed, and be still.  
[Selah.]

5 Offer sacrifices of righteousness,

And trust in Jehovah.

2. SONS OF MEN. Generally "men of high degree," nobles, etc., as opposed to **בְּנֵי אֲדָמָה**, "men of low degree," xlix. 2 [3]; lxii. 9 [10]. So Kimchi understands by it men of high rank who had joined Absalom. And Luther translates, *liebe Herren*, and in the margin *Ihr grossen Hansen*. Some would see in it only a term of "ironical honor." Hupfeld suggests that the expression thus nakedly used may rather denote human weakness, and that there is a sort of emphasis in the expression, "children of *men*," when the Psalm turns to them from *God*; but surely in that case another Hebrew word would have been employed: 'ish is *vir*, not *homo*.

MY GLORY, i.e. personal honor, character, as in lxii. 7 [8]; Job xix. 9; here, perhaps, my state and dignity as king, though it is frequently used in a more extended signification. (See on vii. 5.)

3. KNOW THEN. The conjunction here introduces a marked antithesis, as in ii. 6; iii. 3 [4]. Ye may seek to bring my glory to shame, *yet* know that it is one whom he loves (see Critical Note, and on xvi. 10) that God hath separated and chosen for himself.

HATH SEPARATED, or "hath *marvellously* chosen"; for the notion of something wonderful is found in the root. David would naturally feel that his own career from the sheepfold to the throne

was at every step an instance of this marvellous choice and separation.

4. He passes on to wise and loving counsels. TREMBLE, i.e. before *God*, not before me, and sin not against *him*. The verb expresses any sort of disquietude, or strong emotion, the agitation of anger as well as fear. Hence the rendering of the LXX, *ὀργιζέσθε καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε*, "Be ye angry and sin not," i.e. "do not suffer yourselves to sin in your anger," is certainly a possible rendering of the words, but not suitable here. St. Paul (Eph. iv. 26) uses the words as they stand in the Greek version; not, however, in the way of direct citation.

COMMUNE WITH, lit. *say (it) in your heart*, i.e. reflect, meditate on the truth I have already declared, verse 3. Let the still hours of the night bring calmer and wiser thoughts with them.

5. OFFER SACRIFICES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, or, RIGHTEOUS SACRIFICES, as in li. 19 [21]. The phrase occurs first in Deut. xxxiii. 19, and denotes either (a) sacrifices that God will accept, because they are offered not merely according to the ritual of the law, but with clean hands and pure hearts (Isa. xxix. 13); or (b) fitting sacrifices, such as past sin requires, in order to put it away. Thus, "draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." The advice to offer these sacrifices follows from the general exhortation in the previous verse to relig-



6 (There be) many (that) say : " Who will show us (any) good ? "

Lift<sup>e</sup> (thou) upon us the light of thy countenance, O Jehovah !

7 Thou hast put a gladness in my heart,

More<sup>f</sup> than when their corn and their wine abound.

8 In peace, at once will I lay me down and sleep ;

For THOU, Jehovah, alone makest me to dwell in safety.

ious awe and reflection. Those who, like Absalom and his party, were in possession of Jerusalem, might " offer sacrifices " in the appointed place and with all legal observances, but the sacrifices would be of no worth unless offered in righteousness. " Offer them in a right spirit, and trust in Jehovah himself, and not merely in the offering and the lip-service."

6. THERE BE MANY THAT SAY. Not the enemies addressed before. The reference may be to the friends and companions of David, whose heart failed them in the day of trouble; or more widely, to the general proneness of men to walk by sight rather than by faith.

But David has learnt a better lore. Though far from " the holy mountain," there still dwells in his heart the blessings wherewith the priests of Jehovah had there blessed his people. " Jehovah make his face shine upon thee . . . Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." To that remembered blessing his heart now gives the echo in the prayer, " Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. . . . In peace I will lay me down," etc.

7. THEIR CORN AND THEIR WINE. To whom does the pronoun refer? Hengstenberg and others have supposed the allusion to be to Zibah (2 Sam. xvi.) and the supply which he brought for David and his band. Others (as Ew. and Olsh.) think the pronoun is used indefinitely,

as in lxx. 9 [10], " Thou preparest *their* corn," i.e. the corn of men in general. Hupfeld thinks the reference of the pronoun is to the " many " of the previous verse. They in their worldly-mindedness look for their happiness in the abundance of their earthly things. Hence when adversity threatens they begin to despond. David, on the other hand, has a source of joy, deeper and more unfailling because it flows from above. But, perhaps, David is thinking of his enemies. They have at their command all earthly means of support and enjoyment. He finds it difficult to collect supplies for himself and his army (2 Sam. xvi. 1; xvii. 26, etc.), yet God has given him a better joy than that of harvest or vintage.

For the comparison with the joy of harvest and vintage as the great occasions of festive mirth, see Isa. ix. 3 [2]; Jer. xlviii. 33.

Some have seen in this verse an answer to the prayer of the previous verse. David prays for the light of God's countenance; the answer is given in this gladness of heart. But it is better to take the words, " Thou hast put," etc., as the record of a past as well as present experience, though it still remains true that the " light " is the source of the " gladness."

8. AT ONCE, sc. as soon as I lie down I sleep, not harassed by disturbing and anxious thoughts. For this meaning of the adverb, see cxli. 10; Isa. xlii. 14.

<sup>a</sup> See General Introduction, p. 70.

<sup>b</sup> For a similar construction, see xxxvii. 26; lxxiii. 19; Isa. ix. 4.

<sup>c</sup> הַפֶּלֶא. Many mss. (37 of Kennic. and 28 De Rossi) have הַפֶּלֶא,  
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and the roots are no doubt closely allied. The idea of *separation* is the fundamental idea. (Cf. Ex. viii. 18; ix. 4.) To the form with א attaches more commonly the further idea of something "wonderful," something out of the common course of things (Isa. xxix. 14). But the same idea is also found with the form in ה (xvii. 7; cxxxix. 14).

<sup>d</sup> חָסִיד. (1) The passive form of the word seems to denote "one who is the object of (the divine) mercy," i.e. one who is in covenant with Jehovah, a true Israelite (see l. 5). Parallel with אֲמִינִים, xii. 2, as חָסִיד often is joined with אֶמֶת, "mercy and truth." (2) It passes over, sometimes, apparently rather into an active signification, and means one who shows mercy or kindness to others (xviii. 26). In Micah vii. 2, לֹא חָסִיד, "the unmerciful." Hupfeld's note on this word should by all means be consulted.

<sup>e</sup> נִסָּה, a doubly anomalous form for נִטָּה, which is found in one ms. of Kennicott, in the text.

<sup>f</sup> A pregnant brevity of construction. Fully, "a gladness greater than the gladness of the time when their corn and their wine are multiplied." There are, therefore, three ellipses: (1) of the *adjective* "greater," as lxii. 10; Job xi. 17, and often; (2) of the *noun* "gladness," as in Isa. x. 10; Job xxxv. 2; (3) of the *relative*. This last ellipsis should, according to the accents, be supplied before the verb. Then the rendering would be, "more than the gladness of the season of their corn and wine, which are (or, when they are) increased." The Jewish interpreters, Aben-Ezra, Kimchi, and others, avoid all ellipse, except that of the relative, by rendering מֶנּוּ as a particle of time, "*since* their corn," etc. The LXX, ἀπὸ κάρπου (l. καιροῦ) σίτου καὶ οἴνου ... αὐτῶν ἐπληθύνθησαν, thus making *men* the subject of the verb.

## PSALM V.

LIKE Psalm iii., this is a morning prayer. But the circumstances of the singer are different. He is not now fleeing from open enemies; but he is in peril from the machinations of those who are secretly lying in wait for him (ver. 9, 10). He is not now an exile, but can still enter the house of the Lord, and bow himself towards his holy dwelling-place (ver. 7).

Throughout the Psalm there breathes a strong feeling that God is pledged, by his very character as a righteous God, to defend and bless the righteous. And David (if the Psalm be his) speaks as if in the

full consciousness of his own uprightness. Yet the words are not the words of a self-righteous boaster; for, though no hypocrite or evil-doer, he confesses that it is only in the loving-kindness of God that he can enter his holy temple.

This last expression, "holy temple," it has been thought could not have been used by David, in whose time the tabernacle was yet standing.

But for the discussion of this question, see the note on ver. 7.

The Psalm consists of three parts:

I. An earnest entreaty that God would hearken to the sigh of his heart and the voice of his lips (ver. 1-3).

II. Strophe A. The confidence of the righteous man in going to God as a God who hates iniquity (ver. 4-7).

III. Strophe B. The prayer grounded on this confidence, (1) for guidance for himself; (2) for the destruction of his enemies; (3) for the protection and blessing of all those who, like himself, love the Lord (ver. 8-12).

A kind of parallelism may be traced in the structure of the two strophes. The reason given in ver. 4 for the prayer corresponds to the reason given in ver. 9; ver. 4-6 (the character of God) to ver. 10, where the Psalmist prays him to *manifest* that character in righteous vengeance; ver. 7 (the individual believer) to ver. 11, 12 (the collective body).

[For the Precentor. With Flute Accompaniment.\* A Psalm of David.]

1 GIVE ear to my words, O Jehovah,

Consider my mediation.

2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry,<sup>b</sup> my King and my God,

For unto thee do I pray.

1-3. The first Strophe or Introit. An earnest prayer to be heard. The thoughts are simple, but the language (ver. 1) carefully chosen.

אֲמָרִים ("Words") is a word peculiar to the poets and prophets: הִשְׁמָעִי ("give ear") more common in poetry than prose: הִנְיִי ("meditation") occurs only in two Psalms, here and xxxix. 4. It is applied to a scarcely audible utterance, or a prayer like that of Hannah's, whose lips moved when her voice was not heard (*meditata murmura*). See i. 2. Then

follows (ver. 3) the loud utterance, "the voice of my cry."

2. MY KING. The title is given to God, not merely in a general sense as ruler of the world—as the Canaanites and others called their gods, Moloch and Milcom, or the Greeks addressed Zeus, as ἄναξ and βασιλεύς—but with the distinct recognition of his theocratic relation to the people of Israel. The King of the nation is here also claimed by the individual as his King, the more emphatically, if the Psalm was written by David,

- 3 Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice,  
 In the morning will I set in order for thee (my prayer)  
 and watch.
- 4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure<sup>e</sup> in wickedness,  
 Evil cannot sojourn with<sup>d</sup> thee.
- 5 Fools<sup>e</sup> cannot stand in thy sight;  
 Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
- 6 Thou destroyest them that speak lies;  
 The bloodthirsty and deceitful man doth Jehovah abhor.
- 7 But as for me, in the multitude of thy loving-kindness will  
 I enter thy house;  
 I will bow myself towards thy holy temple in thy fear.

by one who was himself a king. See the notes on xlv. 4; lxxiv. 12.

UNTO THEE, i.e. not to man or angel; to *thee*, for thou wilt hear. (Cf. xvii. 6.)

3. IN THE MORNING. Emphatic. (Accus. of time, as lv. 18.)

I WILL SET (or "lay") IN ORDER (viz. my prayer). The word is used of laying in order the wood (Lev. i. 7) and the victim (Lev. i. 8; vi. 12 [5]) for the sacrifices. One of the first duties of the priest, as soon as day dawned, was to lay the wood in order for the morning sacrifice (Lev. vi. 12 [5]; Numb. xxviii. 4). So the Psalmist brings his offering, prepares himself as a spiritual sacrifice, and lays before God the fruit of his lips. (The idea is expressed at length in Ps. cxli. 2, "and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.") And then he "watches," "looks out" (the same verb as in Hab. ii. 1), for an answer to his petition, as the priest might look (or as Elijah looked on Carmel) for the fire from heaven to descend and consume the victim.

4-7. Jehovah is a righteous God, and therefore he hateth and punisheth evil-doers, but will be merciful to him who worships him aright.

4. The Psalmist expects to be heard, for only the righteous can approach a righteous God. "Ratiocinatur," says Calvin, "ab ipsius Dei naturâ."

"Evil (personified) cannot be a guest or friend of thine; cannot tarry in thy house," as xv. 1; lxi. 4 [5]; not merely however with a reference to the Temple, but to that spiritual abiding in the presence of God, and in the light of his countenance, which is the joy only of them that are true of heart. To the wicked the light of God's countenance is a consuming fire.

5. CANNOT STAND, lit. "set themselves," the same word as in ii. 2. The allusion may be (1) to the judgment, "cannot stand before God's holiness and power as armed against them," as in Deut. vii. 24; ix. 2, etc., or (2) to the privilege of nobles and others who stand in the presence of the king, cf. Prov. xxii. 29. So the angels are said to stand before God (Job. i. 6; ii. 1).

WORKERS OF INIQUITY occurs frequently in Job and the Psalms as a description of the wicked, and has been adopted by our Lord in the New Test., *οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν*, Matt. vii. 23.

6. BLOODTHIRSTY . . . MAN, lit. "man of bloods," the plur. being used of *bloodshed, murder*, as the plur. *θάνατοι* in Greek of violent death.

7. As the Psalm is a morning hymn, the futures may be taken strictly, "I will enter," etc. But there is also something of the potential meaning about them: sc. the wicked *cannot* enter, but



8 O Jehovah, lead me in thy righteousness, because of them  
that lie in wait<sup>f</sup> for me,  
Make thy way plain<sup>g</sup> before my face ;

I *may* (and will) enter thine house. The words בַּיִת (*bayith*) and הֵיכָל (*heykal*) seem at first sight decisive against the Davidic authorship of the Psalm, as being only applicable to the Temple. But both words are applied to the sanctuary of Shiloh. The former is used of the tabernacle (Josh. vi. 24; 2 Sam. xii. 20), as it is even of tents or movable dwellings, like those of the patriarchs (Gen. xxvii. 15). Hupfeld thinks it need not refer here to the Temple at all, but may be used figuratively with reference to the verb "sojourn," (ver. 4 [5]), so that the meaning would be, evil cannot find a welcome with thee, but I may hope to be received by thee as a guest and friend. But though, as was observed on verse 4, and as appears from many other passages in the Psalms (see e.g. xxiii. and lxxxiv.), the two ideas of the earthly sanctuary and the spiritual enjoyment of God's presence may not be very carefully distinguished by the writer, it is most natural to understand by the house of God the literal structure, whether tabernacle or temple; and this is confirmed by the parallelism in the next member of the verse. The other word, הֵיכָל, which means properly a large building, "a palace," no doubt presents more difficulty. It is used of the sanctuary at Shiloh (1 Sam. i. 9; iii. 3). But that seems to have been not a tabernacle, but a building of a more substantial kind. We read at any rate of posts and folding-doors (1 Sam. i. 9; iii. 15); whereas in the time of David, "the ark of the covenant of the Lord remained under curtains" (1 Chron. xvii. 1). And there is certainly no proof that הֵיכָל is ever used of this temporary structure. Still it is possible that the word which had already been employed when speaking of the house in Shiloh, continued to be employed when only a tent was pitched for the ark (1 Chron. xv. 1). It might still be called a הֵיכָל, not because of its size

(הֵיכָל = כֵּל, *capax esse*), but because of its solemn dedication as the house of God, the palace of the Great King.

IN THE MULTITUDE OF THY LOVING-KINDNESS. The Psalmist has access to God not only because he is of a different character from those mentioned in verse 7, but because the King of kings, of his grace and goodness, permits him to draw near. Therefore also he adds "in thy fear." We see here the mingled feeling of confidence and liberty of access with solemn awe and deep humility which befits every true worshipper.

8-10. In the former part of the Psalm, David has placed himself in sharp contrast with "the workers of iniquity," with "them that speak lies," etc., and on this ground has claimed the protection and favor of Jehovah. Now he entreats more directly guidance for himself and the destruction of his enemies, as false and treacherous men, like those whom he has already described, and whom "Jehovah abhors."

8. LEAD ME (strictly, as a shepherd, cf. xxiii. 2, 3; xxxi. 3 [4]), used almost exclusively of *divine* guidance, whether of the nation or of individuals.

IN THY RIGHTEOUSNESS. This may be understood (1) of God's own character. His righteousness itself is pledged to succor those who worship him and seek his guidance; cf. cxliii. 1. Or (2) it may mean "the way of God's righteousness" (cf. for instance, Prov. viii. 20; xii. 28), called *God's* righteousness, not only as pleasing to him, but as coming from him as its source; a righteousness of which he is the law and measure, as well as that which he has appointed for men to walk in. So δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ in the New Test. means both God's own attribute of righteousness (as in Rom. iii. 5), and also the righteousness which he requires of men, and gives to men (Rom. i. 17; iii. 21, 22). Both senses

- 9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth ;<sup>a</sup>  
 Their inward part is a yawning gulf ;<sup>i</sup>  
 Their throat (is) an open sepulchre,  
 (While) they make smooth their tongue.
- 10 Punish<sup>k</sup> thou them, O God : —  
 Let them fall through<sup>l</sup> their own counsels :  
 In<sup>m</sup> the multitude of their transgressions thrust them away ;  
 For they have rebelled against thee.
- 11 And all who find refuge in thee shall rejoice ;  
 For ever shall they shout for joy ;  
 And thou wilt defend them :  
 And they who love thy name shall exult in thee.

seem to be blended in Rom. iii. 25, 26.

**MAKE THY WAY.** The way in which thou wouldst have me to go, not any self-devised way of my own. This is to be preferred to the reading of the LXX, Vulg., and Arab.: "Make my way plain before thy face."

**PLAIN OR STRAIGHT,** lit. "level" (cf. xxvii. 11, and note on cxliii. 10), free from hinderances and temptations, lest I stumble and fall into the hand of my adversaries. The "straight way" may be either (morally) the path of purity, uprightness, etc.; or (physically) the path of safety, prosperity; or rather, both ideas are combined.

9. **FOR.** This gives the reason for the prayer, "Lead me because of them that lie in wait for me"; *for* their malice is such that I need thy care and guidance. With them, mouth, heart, throat, and tongue are all instruments of evil.

**NO FAITHFULNESS,** lit. "nothing firm, settled."

The expressions point not to foreign oppressors, but evidently to ungodly men in the nation itself who had recourse to slander and treachery when they dared not use open violence. It is the opposition and the contest ever repeated between the church and the world. Cf. Gal. iv. 29.

10. **AGAINST THEE.** The enemies of David are the enemies of David's God.

"Whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

11. **AND ALL . . . SHALL,** or, **SO SHALL ALL.** For the cause of David is the cause of all who have David's heart and fear David's God. The overthrow of his enemies is the overthrow of the enemies of the church. If one member suffer, all suffer; if one triumph, all will be partakers in the triumph. The verse might also be rendered, as in the E. V., Luther, Ewald, and in former editions of this work, in the optative:

"And let all who find refuge in thee rejoice;

Let them ever shout for joy;

And do thou defend them:

And let them who love thy name exult in thee."

But verse 11 seems not so much to carry on the wish, as to express the consequence which will certainly follow the fulfilment of the prayer in verse 10.

**AND THOU WILT DEFEND.** This is almost equivalent to, "because thou wilt (or, dost) defend," but the clauses, as is common in Hebrew, are simply linked together by the copula. The verb means strictly *to cover*, and the figure is either taken from the cherubim with outstretched wings covering the mercy-seat (hence of God, xci. 4); or from the *booth* or *tabernacle* (Heb. *succah*), used figuratively of God's house as a place of shelter

12 For thou, O Jehovah, dost bless the righteous,  
With favor dost thou compass him,<sup>a</sup> as with a shield.

and refuge from the world. See the expansion of the figure, Isa. iv. 5, 6.

THY NAME. God's name is that whereby he makes himself known; his revelation of himself as a God of love and grace to his people.

12. FOR. If we take the preceding verse in an optative sense, this must be explained, let them rejoice, "for" this is an eternal truth, that thou dost bless

the righteous; or we may render, let them rejoice *that* thou dost bless, etc.

SHIELD. The word denotes properly the large shield (Heb. *Tsinnah*, scutum) which covered the whole body; used of the shield of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 7). For the difference between this and the other word used in iii. 3, see Smith's Dict. of the Bible, Art. "Arms."

<sup>a</sup> אֶל־נְחִילֹתָ. LXX, ὑπὲρ τῆς κληρονομουσύνης, which is clearly wrong. נְחִילֹתָ, sing. נְחִילָה = נְחִיָּה (from the Niph. of חָלַל) is the name of a musical instrument, probably the same as נְחִילִי, a hollow reed or flute. That this was in use in the Temple service is certain. See Isa. xxx. 29; 1 Sam. x. 5; 1 Kings i. 40. אֶל, not גַּל, because it was used as an accompaniment. So Lat. *canere ad*.

<sup>b</sup> שִׁוְיָ only here, but doubtless from a noun שִׁוְיָ, instead of the more usual שִׁוְיָה, from the root שׁוּעַ, which only occurs in the Piel (connected with צוּחַ, Aeth. צוּעַ, *to cry*). There is no need, with Röd. in Gesen. *Thesaur.*, to take the word as inf. Piel with Dagesh omitted.

<sup>c</sup> חָפֵץ, as a verb most commonly, and in a stronger sense followed by כִּי = *delectari aliquo*, and used with reference both to persons and things; in a weaker sense with the accus. only of things (abstracts); and so here the part. or verbal adj., which in the sing. is always followed by the accus., as in xxxiv. 13, xxxv. 27, etc.; in the plur. it is sometimes in the stat. constr.

<sup>d</sup> יִגְרָה, defective orthography, in consequence of the drawing back of the accent, with accus. (as cxx. 5; Isa. xxxiii. 14), instead of יָגַם, a construction which is common enough with verbs of dwelling, when there follows not only the *place* in which, but also the *persons* with whom, the dwelling is made, as here, and lvii. 5; lxviii. 19; cxx. 5; Gen. xxx. 20.

<sup>e</sup> הוֹלְלִים, a strong word, denoting fools who carry their folly to the height of madness. According to Hupfeld, the root-idea is that of *empty space* (as in German *Halle*, *Hölle*; *hallen*, *hohl sein*); then (1) to be *empty*, *hollow*, fig. *vain*, *foolish* = אֵלֵל (אֵלִיל), אָהַל, אֹל (אֹוִיל): so part. Kal., as here, and fut. lxxvi. 5; trans. Po.; reflex. Hithpo.; (2) to *shout*, *call*, *boast* (comp. εὐχῆσθαι and αὐχῆν), = יָלַל, אָלַל (also *to lament*); so in Piel and Hithp.; (3) to be *clear*, *shine*, especially

Hiph. trans. According to Delitzsch, the primitive idea is that of *making a noise, shouting*, etc. See note on lxxiii. 3.

<sup>f</sup> שׁוֹרֵרִי. This is usually supposed to be for מְשׁוֹרֵרִי, part. Kal of שׁוֹר, *observare*, as Jer. v. 26; Hos. xiii. 7, and so Aq., ἐφδεύοντάς μου, and Jerome, *insidiatores meos*. See on the dropping of the מ, cxviii. Note <sup>e</sup>. But Hupfeld regards it only as a kindred form of צוֹרֵרִים. Comp. שָׁנָה and שָׁנָה, צָנָה and צָנָה, etc.

<sup>g</sup> הַיִּשָּׁר, Kethibh, to be read הַיִּשָּׁר. The Keri הַיִּשָּׁר, as in Prov. iv. 25. In Gen. viii. 17; Isa. xlv. 2, there are similar corrections of the Hiphil, but apparently without sufficient reason.

<sup>h</sup> בְּפִיָּהּ. Sing. suff. for plur. by a common enallage of number, especially in the suff. of the third pers., not only in different clauses, but even in the same clause (see lxii. 5; Isa. ii. 20; v. 23; Jer. xxxi. 15), to be explained by the fact that a class or species may be regarded either as many, or as one. The word is interposed between אֵין and its genitive, as in vi. 6; xxxii. 2. This is more usual with pronominal forms such as בּוֹ, לוֹ, Gen. xi. 30; Lev. xi. 10, 11; Isa. i. 6. נְכוֹנָה is fem. part. Niph'al of כָּן, used here as a neuter.

<sup>i</sup> הַיָּוֶה, a poetical word, occurring only in Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, and mostly in plur. in the sense of "mischief wrought through human wickedness." It comes from a root הוה (cognate with אוה, אבה, etc., root איהו, אביהב) to *breathe*, prop. from *an open mouth*; hence it marks (1) the act, the open mouth, the yawning chasm (*hiatus, rictus oris*, χάω, *gap*), and (2) the feeling denoted thereby, the breathing, panting, and hence the eager desire, but always used in a bad sense of *evil* desire, as in lii. 7 [9] (see note on lii. 2), and Prov. x. 13; xi. 6; Mic. vii. 3. The word occurs in the sing., and in a physical sense, only Job vi. 2; xxx. 13 (in both with Keri, היה), elsewhere only in plur., and with a moral meaning, but denoting not merely evil generally, but always evil or destruction *purposed* and *prepared*. So here, where the notion of a yawning abyss may be retained as supported by the parallelism, "no faithfulness," lit. "nothing firm," "no sure ground." See Hupfeld's note here.

<sup>k</sup> הַאֲשָׁרִים. The Hiph. only here. In Kal the verb means *to incur guilt*, and then by a natural transition, *to suffer* as guilty, *to be punished* (as in xxxiv. 21, 22 [22, 23]; Hos. v. 15; x. 2; xiv. 1, with a double sense Jer. ii. 3, and elsewhere). Hence in Hiph. to *pronounce guilty, condemn, leave to punishment* (like הרשיע, as the opp. of הצדיק). So the LXX, κρινον αὐτούς; Jerome, *condemna*. This usage in Hebrew has a profound moral basis. Sin and chastisement, righteousness and the manifestation of that righteousness, are inseparable. The reward and



the punishment *partake of the nature* of the things (or persons) rewarded and punished. Hence the same word means both guilt and punishment. Akin to this is the well-known use of the word *sin* for *sin-offering*.

<sup>1</sup> מִן. The prep. מִן is probably used here of the *cause*, as in Hos. xi. 6 (with the same word), *through* or *because* of their counsels. Others, however, as Gesen., De Wette, Ewald, render, "let them fall *from* their counsels"; and so in the first edition of this work. So in Latin, *Excidere spe, excidere ausis*, and in Greek, *πίπτειν ἀπὸ τῆς ἔλπιδος*, Sir. xiv. 2. But it does not seem sufficiently justified by Hebrew usage, and I have therefore abandoned it. The other interpretation, too, accords better with the parallelism, "In the multitude of their transgressions."

מִן. The prep. gives here not so much the *reason*, "on account of," as the *means by which*, and the *condition in which*, they are to be cast away. Delitzsch well compares John viii. 21, 24, "Ye shall die *in* your sins," ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν.

הִצַּטְתִּי. The verb is Kal, and not Hiph., and the constr. has been rightly explained by Aben-Ezra as that of the verb act., with double accus. of the object (after the analogy of verbs of *covering*), but, as he remarks, with the second accus. placed first; and not only so, but בְּצִנָּה, which is in apposition with the second accus., is placed before instead of after it, so that there is a complete inversion of the usual order, which would be: חַטָּאתִי בְּצִנָּה.

## PSALM VI.

THE first of the seven Penitential Psalms. (See Introduction, p. 19.)

In great peril from his enemies, and in great anguish of heart, David cries to God for mercy. In the malice of his enemies he sees the rod of God's chastisement; and therefore he makes his prayer to God for deliverance. The struggle has lasted so long, the grief is so bitter, that his health has given way, and he has been brought to the gates of the grave. But, even whilst thus pouring out the anguish of his spirit, light and peace visit him, and he breaks forth into the joy of thanksgiving.

The Psalm is said to be a Psalm of David, and there is no reason to question this, although, at the same time, there is nothing in it to guide us to any peculiar circumstances of his life.

The Psalm falls into three strophes :

I. (ver. 1-3) and II. (ver. 4-7) are both the outpouring of the heart in a cry for mercy, and in both it springs from the deep misery of the sufferer. But in II. this is dwelt upon more at length as a motive for deliverance.

III. The joyful assurance that already his prayer has been heard, and that all his enemies shall perish (ver. 8-10).

Accordingly, S. Schmid divides the Psalm into two parts, and says :  
 "Preces hominis in angustia hostium et conscientiae constituti : quam I. ut gravissimam describit et *deprecatur* (ver. [2-8] 1-7). II. se auditum credens contra hostes gloriatur (ver. [9-11] 8-10)."

[For the Precentor. With Accompaniment of Stringed Instruments.<sup>a</sup>  
 Upon the Octave.<sup>b</sup> A Psalm of David.]

1 JEHOVAH, in thine anger rebuke me not ;

Neither in thy hot displeasure correct me.

2 Be gracious unto me, O Jehovah, for I languish :<sup>c</sup>

Heal me, O Jehovah, for my bones are vexed.

1. **ANGER . . . DISPLEASURE.** The prayer occurs again, in almost the same words, xxxviii. 1 [2]. All God's chastisements are not in anger. There is a fatherly correction of love : "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten," Rev. iii. 19. See also Ps. xciv. 12 ; cxviii. 17, 18 ; Prov. iii. 11, 12 ; and, based upon this passage, Heb. xii. 3-11. Indeed, the whole Book of Job is intended to correct the error that "God's chastisements are always an evidence of his displeasure." And the sufferings of Christ are a witness to the contrary ; for that "the Father loveth the Son" is eternally true.

Does the Psalmist, then, pray that God would chasten him indeed, but in love, not in anger ? This is Luther's interpretation : "This he regards not ; nay, will readily suffer that he be punished and chastened ; but he begs that it may be done in mercy and goodness, not in anger and fury . . . he teaches us, therefore, that there are two rods of God ; one of mercy and goodness, another of anger and fury. Hence Jeremiah prays (chap. x. 24),

"O Lord, correct me, but with judgment ; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." But though there is nothing against this view considered in itself, yet it does not harmonize with the context. David does not ask that the chastening may be a chastening of love, or that its severity may be mitigated ; he asks that it may *altogether* cease. The chastisement has been so heavy, it has endured so long, and his own sense of sin is so grievous, that he begins to fear lest God should shut up his tender mercies in displeasure, and should even consume him in his wrath.

The meaning, says Calvin, is : "I indeed confess that I deserve nothing but destruction ; but because I could not endure the severity of thy judgment, deal not with me after my deserts ; yea, rather, forgive the sins whereby I have provoked thine anger against me."

2. **MY BONES ARE VEXED**, or "terrified." "Nec carnem nominat quae tenerior est, sed ossium nomine intelligit praeceptum robur suum fuisse tremefactum." — Calvin.

3 My soul also is sore vexed ;

But thou, O Jehovah, how long ? —

4 Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul :

Oh save me for thy loving-kindness' sake.

5 For in death there is no remembrance of thee :

In the unseen world<sup>a</sup> who shall give thee thanks ?

6 I am weary with my groaning :

Every night make I my bed to swim,

I water my couch with my tears.

3. MY SOUL. LXX, ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐταράχθη σφόδρα, the words uttered by our Lord in John xii. 27.

BUT THOU, O JEHOVAH, HOW LONG ? Deep and troubled emotion suffers him not to complete the sentence. Perhaps we may supply, "How long wilt thou delay to have mercy upon me?" Cf. xc. 13. "Domine quousque?" was Calvin's motto. The most intense grief in trouble, it is said, could never extort from him another word.

4. The beginning of this strophe is closely linked to the end of the last.

RETURN; for it seems to the sufferer as if God had been absent during his affliction. And there is no hope for him but in God. Therefore the repeated prayer, *Do thou* be gracious unto me: — how long wilt *thou* be absent? Return *thou*, etc. And observe, not only "be gracious, *for I languish*," but "deliver me for *thy loving-kindness' sake*." Any man may use the first argument: only one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious can use the last.

5. Exactly parallel to this is Hezekiah's language (Isa. xxxviii. 18), "For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; . . . The living, the living, he shall praise thee." The argument here employed is no doubt characteristic of the old dispensation. They who then feared and loved God, nevertheless walked in shadows, and their hope was not yet full of immortality. Hence their earnest clinging to life, so different from St. Paul's "desire to depart," to which there is nothing parallel in the Old

Testament. It was not that they dreaded annihilation, but rather a kind of disembodied existence apart from the light of God's presence. *Premature* death, in particular, seems to have been deprecated, as if it were a token of God's displeasure. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." So also Hezekiah prays: "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off, like a weaver, my life." As Calvin remarks, "... dicendum quod non simpliciter mortem sed iram Dei, et quidem non vulgarem, fuerit deprecatus." And further, the desire to continue in life is always connected with the desire to praise God. Cf. xxx. 9 [10]; lxxxviii. 11–13; cxv. 17, and Isa. xxxviii. 18, ff. The Old Testament saint pleaded with God for life, in order that that life might be consecrated to his service. And it is very touching to see how, with the weakness of man's heart trembling at dissolution, there mingles the child-like confidence which fears not to advance the plea that God's glory is concerned in granting its request. "Through Christ not only has a change been wrought in men's *conceptions*, of the unseen world, but a change has been partly wrought and partly made possible in the *condition* of the departed."—*Moll, in Lange's Psalter.*

6, 7. A further description of his distress. The heart can make *all* known to God. Thoughts and feelings and acts that we should be ashamed to confess to our fellow-men, we fear not to confess to

7 Mine eye wasteth away because of grief.

It waxeth old because of all mine adversaries.

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity,

For Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping;

9 Jehovah hath heard my supplication,

Jehovah will receive my prayer.

10 All mine enemies shall be ashamed and sore vexed;

They shall turn backward, they shall be ashamed suddenly.\*

him. Nor is this exaggeration. "They who know only in some small degree," says Calvin, "what it is to wrestle with the fear of eternal death, will find in these words no exaggeration."

8-10. Mark the sudden change, as of sunrise upon night. Already the prayer and the weeping have been heard. Already faith has triumphed. Already he can defy the enemies who have been maliciously anticipating his end, and tell

them they shall be disappointed with a suddenness which only makes the disappointment more bitter.

8. WORKERS OF INIQUITY. See on v. 5.

9. HATH HEARD . . . WILL RECEIVE. The last is a consequence of the first, not a mere variation of tense. He *will* grant, for he *has* heard. The verb RECEIVE is used here in the sense of favorably accepting, as gifts, offerings, etc.

\* See note on the inscription of Ps. iv.

<sup>b</sup> צִלְהַשְׁמִינִית. Cf. Ps. xiii. 1 and 1 Chron. xv. 20, 21). We read in this last passage of נבלים על עלמית (psalteries on Alamoth, Eng. Vers.) and כנורית על השמינית (harp on the Sheminith). Now, if by Alamoth, maidens, we may understand "women's voices, i.e. sopranos," we may suppose "upon the Sheminith" or "octave" to mean that it was to be sung by men's voices.

<sup>c</sup> אֶמְלֵל אֲנִי. Aben-Ezra, who has been followed by many of the modern grammarians, takes this as pret. Pul. 3d pers. Then, in order to bring this into agreement with the pron. of the 1st pers. אֲנִי, either (a) an ellipse of the relative is assumed: "one who languishes as I do" — a construction which has no real parallel in such examples as הִנְנִי רֹסֵר, Isa. xxviii. 16; see also Isa. xxix. 14; xxxviii. 5 (where הִנְנִי stands first, and the imperf., as often, takes the place of the future), which are commonly alleged as justifying it; or (b) the pron. אֲנִי is supposed to stand for the affirmative = אֶמְלֵלְהִי (Gesen. § 44, 1, not.). But the word can only be either an adj. = אֶמְלֵל, Neh. iii. 34 (Kimchi, Ewald, *Lehrb.*, § 157 b), or part. Palal, with loss of the מ for אֶמְלֵל (which is not unusual in part. Pual), and the further shortening of Kametz into Pathach may readily be explained by the accentuation; the two words having, in fact, but one accent (*Merka mahpachatus*),



as i. 3; ii. 7, though here, as in many other cases, the Makkeph is omitted.

<sup>d</sup> שָׁאֵל. The derivation of the word has been much disputed. The old etymology from שָׁאֵל, *to ask*, as descriptive of the *insatiable* character of Hades (Prov. xxx. 15; comp. the *orcus rapax* of Catullus), is now generally abandoned. Most probably it is from a root שָׁעַל (with softening of the ש into ש) not in use, the meaning of which is preserved in the noun שְׁעָל, *the hollow palm*, מִשְׁעָל, *a hollow way*, so that Sheol would mean *the hollow* (subterranean) *place*. Cf. the German *Hölle* and *Höhle*, Gothic *halja*, English *hole* and *hell*. So Böttcher, Ewald, Maurer, Gesen., and others. Hupfeld, on the other hand, would connect the root with שָׁעַל, שָׁעַל, שָׁעַל, in the sense of that which is *loose, lax, hanging down*, with the double notion of *sinking down* and *separation* (as in χάω, *hio*, χαλάω, etc.); hence in שָׁאֵל there is the notion both of *sinking, abyss, depth* (as in the poetic תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אֲרִיץ), and also that of *chasm, hollow, empty space*, as in the German *Hölle*, and in χάσμα, χάος. This view has been maintained at length by E. Scheid, *Cant. Hiskiae*, p. 20 ff.; but I agree with Rödiger, in Gesen. *Thesaur. s. v.*, in thinking “nec minima quidem veri specie, quum *penduli, laxique* notio a notione inferni prorsus aliena sit.”

<sup>e</sup> The Miel accent in the three last words makes the conclusion the more imposing. Observe, too, the play on the words *yashubhu, yebhoshu*.

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## PSALM VII.

“SHALL not the Judge of all the earth do right?” might stand as the motto of this Psalm. In full reliance on God’s righteousness, David appeals to him to judge his cause. The righteous God cannot but save the righteous, and punish the wicked. This David believes to be the law of his moral government; and he applies it to his own case. His heart bears him witness that he has done no wrong to any man (ver. 3, 4), whereas his enemies have plotted unceasingly to take away his life. He therefore confidently anticipates his own deliverance and their overthrow (ver. 17, 18) as the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God.

According to the inscription, this Psalm was written by David, and was occasioned by the words of Cush the Benjamite. There can be very little doubt that the inscription, in this instance, preserves an ancient tradition. It is accepted by Ewald, as it is by the majority of

critics, and the Psalm unquestionably bears every internal evidence of having been written by David. There is, however, more difficulty in fixing the precise circumstances under which he wrote it. Who Cush was, we do not know. Some, as Thenius, would identify him with the Cushite (2 Sam. xviii., where the English version gives Cushi as a proper name) who brought the tidings of Absalom's death to the king. But the language of the Psalm does not harmonize with such a supposition. The Cushite was the bearer of heavy tidings; but there is no reason to suppose he was an enemy of David's, or he would not have been selected by Joab for such an errand. Others have conjectured that "Cush" is not a proper name, but merely a nickname, or term of reproach, equivalent to "the black," "the blackamoor," or "the negro," as describing, however, not the face, but the character. In this sense, it has been applied to Shimei, as the bitterest and most foul-mouthed of David's enemies. But the Psalm falls in far better with the persecution of Saul than with the flight from Absalom. Others, again, and in particular the Jewish commentators, think that the epithet designated Saul as the man of "black" heart. But this is not very probable; nor is it likely that David would have used such language as that of ver. 14-16 in reference to Saul. It is more probable that this Benjamite, named Cush, belonging to Saul's tribe, was one of his adherents who took an active part against David, and was conspicuous among the calumniators of whom David complains to the king. His "words," it seems, were bitter and unscrupulous — words which kindled a fire of indignation in David's soul, and led him to repel the charges brought against him in the same eager and passionate way in which he protests his innocence to Saul.

The language is remarkably like the language which he addresses to Saul when he leaves the cave of Engedi. Compare, for instance, the words of ver. 3, 4 —

If there be iniquity in my hands ;  
If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me ; —

Yea, rather, I have rescued him that without cause is mine adversary — with his words in 1 Sam. xxiv. 11 [12], "Know thou, and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand; and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it"; and with Saul's confession immediately afterwards (ver. 17 [18]), "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." "How forcible," read in this connection, it has been said, "is the singular reiteration in the narrative of the phrase 'my hand,' which occurs six times in four verses. The peculiarly

abrupt introduction in ver. 4 of the clause 'I delivered him that without cause is mine enemy,' which completely dislocates the grammatical structure, is best accounted for by supposing that David's mind is still full of the temptation to stain his hand with Saul's blood, and is vividly conscious of the effort which he had made to overcome it. And the solemn invocation of destruction which he dares to address to Jehovah his God includes the familiar figure of himself as a fugitive before the hunters, which is found in the words already quoted, and which here, as there, stands in immediate connection with his assertion of clean hands."<sup>1</sup>

So again the solemn appeal to God's righteous judgment, the deep consciousness of his own integrity which was so fully admitted by Saul, are but the echo in the Psalm, only expressed in a lofty strain of poetry, of the same thought which is repeated with so much emphasis as he speaks to Saul on the hillside: "Jehovah judge between me and thee, and Jehovah avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee. . . . Jehovah therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee, and see and plead my cause, and do me justice at thy hand" (ver. 12, 15 [13, 16]).

We must look, then, to circumstances like those recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-sixth chapters of the first book of Samuel, and to the reproaches of a Benjamite named Cush, a leading and unscrupulous partisan of Saul's, as having given occasion to the Psalm.

We have the following divisions:

I. An Introduction, consisting (1) of an expression of confidence in God; and (2) of a prayer for deliverance from enemies (ver 1, 2).

II. A solemn protestation of innocence before God (ver. 3-5).

III. An appeal to God as the righteous judge of all the earth, to manifest in the most public manner (ver. 6, 7) his righteousness in pronouncing sentence both upon the Psalmist himself (ver. 8) and upon his enemies (ver. 9), with a confident assertion (ver. 10) as to the result (ver. 6-10).

IV. A description of God's dealing with the wicked, (1) in the way of direct punishments, and (2) as leaving the wicked to be snared in his own devices (ver. 11-16).

V. A short thanksgiving on review of the righteous judgment of God (ver. 17).

<sup>1</sup> Rev. A. Maclaren, in *Sunday at Home* for 1871, p. 372, where the parallel is well worked out.

[Shiggaion\* of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.]

- 1 JEHOVAH, my God, in thee have I found refuge ;  
 Save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me !
- 2 Lest he tear my soul, like a lion,  
 Rending in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
- 3 Jehovah, my God, if I have done this ;  
 If there be iniquity in my hands ;
- 4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with  
 me ; —
- Yea, rather I have rescued<sup>b</sup> him that without cause is  
 mine adversary : —
- 5 Let the enemy pursue after<sup>c</sup> my soul and take (it) ;  
 Yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth,  
 And make my glory abide in the dust. [Selah.]

1. With that word of faith, hope, and love, "In thee have I found refuge," David begins his prayer. Cf. xi. 1; xvi. 1; xxxi. 2; lxxi. 1. From that refuge, far safer than cave or rock or mountain fastness, he can watch his pursuers, thirsting for his blood.

MY PURSUERS. David being like a bird (xi. 1), "a partridge of the mountains," or like a roe or a gazelle chased by the lions.

2. The transition from the plural "pursuers," to the singular "lest he," etc. has been explained by the fact that some one of those enemies is prominently before the singer's mind. David was thinking, perhaps, of Saul, or of that Benjamite whose name appears in the inscription. But such transitions are very common in Hebrew; often where no individual is meant the singular is used collectively — the many being now regarded as one. See on v. note.<sup>h</sup>

3. With a quick turn he protests passionately his innocence, his soul surging with emotion, his words broken by the vehemence of his feelings, as he thinks how unjustly he has been assailed. Again as in v. 1, "my God," IF I HAVE DONE

THIS, *sc.* what follows, or rather, "this thing that I am charged with." Under a deep sense of wrong, indignation choking him, he calls it "this," without stopping to explain. IF THERE BE INIQUITY. Comp. what David says to Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 12; xxvi. 18.

4. HIM THAT WAS AT PEACE WITH ME; cf. xli. 10; Jer. xxxviii. 22.

YEA, RATHER, *etc.* The allusion may perhaps be to what is recorded 1 Sam. xxiv. 4-7.

5. The expressions may imply either the depth of humiliation and degradation, or absolute destruction.

MY GLORY may either mean (*a*) as in iv. 2 [3]; Job. xix. 9, "character, good name, honor, position," etc.; and then to lay this in the dust will mean, of course, to degrade and to dishonor (as in many similar phrases, e.g. lxxiv. 7; lxxxix. 39; Job xvi. 15; xl. 13); or (*b*) as in xvi. 9; xxx. 12 [13]; lvii. 8 [9]; Gen. xlix. 6, "the soul," as that which is noblest in man, that which most distinctly severs him from other creatures and links him to God, — a sense which here accords with the parallelism in the two previous members of the verse — and then THE



## 6 Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger !

Lift up thyself against the fierce wrath of mine adversaries ;

Yea awake for me ! — Thou hast commanded judgment. —

## 7 And let the congregation of the people come about thee,

And over it do thou return on high.

## 8 Jehovah ministereth justice to the peoples :

Judge me, O Jehovah, according to my righteousness,

And according to my integrity be it done to me.<sup>d</sup>

DUST must mean "the grave," or "death," as in xxii. 15 [16], 29 [30]. The phrases "to tread down," "lay in the dust," may, however, still refer (Hengst., Hupfeld) to a death of ignominy.

6-8. The rapid utterance of feeling has here again somewhat broken the poet's words. Hitherto he has protested his innocence ; now, in the full consciousness of that innocence, he comes before the very judgment-seat of God, and demands the fullest and most public vindication. Then he sees, as it were in a vision, the judgment set : "Thou hast commanded judgment." Next, that sentence may be pronounced with due solemnity, he calls upon God to gather the nations round him, and to seat himself upon his judgment-throne. Lastly, he prays God, as the Judge of all nations, to judge himself.

6. LIFT UP THYSELF, i.e. manifest thyself in all thy glory as the true and righteous Judge ; cf. xciv. 2 ; Isa. xxxiii. 10.

FIERCE WRATH. I have endeavored by the epithet to express the plural as an intensive form, though it may also be used to denote the *many* acts in which the wrath was exhibited.

THOU HAST COMMANDED JUDGMENT. I give this, in accordance with the accents, as an independent clause ; but there may be an omission of the relative, "Thou who hast," etc., or of the causal conjunction, "Inasmuch as thou hast," etc. The E. V., "Awake for me (to) the judgment (that) thou hast commanded," takes the same view of the construction as the LXX, Syr., and Jerome. The

"judgment" may either be generally that justice which God has ordained in his word, — thou who art the source of justice, thou who hast commanded men to practise justice, manifest that justice now ; or it may refer to the particular act of judgment, mentioned in the next two verses.

7. Let there be a solemn, deliberate, and public vindication of my innocence. Mendelssohn renders freely :

"Versammle Völker um dein Richterthron,

Und wende dich gen Himmel über sie."

OVER IT, etc. God is represented as coming down to visit the earth, and to gather the nations before him, and then as returning and sitting down above them on the judgment-seat.

The clause cannot mean that when God has delivered his judicial sentence, he is to return to his heavenly throne (Wordsworth). According to this explanation, the words "over it," i.e. the congregation of the people, are pointless, and, moreover, the whole verse evidently describes the act of judgment, the crowd assembled to hear the sentence, and then the delivery of the sentence. The verb RETURN may mark that God *has resumed* the office of judge, which for a time he had seemed to abandon ; or it may be explained as above.

8. We may paraphrase : "O thou who art the Judge of all *the world*, judge *me*."

MINISTERETH JUSTICE. The verb implies *ruling* as well as judging. For the difference between this verb and that in the next clause see note on lxxii. 2.

- 9 O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,  
And establish thou the righteous!  
For thou that triest<sup>e</sup> the hearts and reins art a righteous God.
- 10 My shield is upon God,  
Who saveth them that are upright of heart.
- 11 God is a righteous Judge,  
And a God who is angry every day.
- 12 If (a man) will not turn, he whetteth his sword;  
He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
- 13 Yea for that man he hath made ready the weapons of death;  
His arrows he maketh fiery (arrows).<sup>f</sup>
- 14 Lo, he travaileth with iniquity:—  
He hath both conceived mischief and brought forth falsehood.
- 15 He hath digged a pit and hollowed it out;  
And falleth<sup>g</sup> into the pitfall of his making.<sup>h</sup>

9. WICKEDNESS OF THE WICKED. Comp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 14, to which there may possibly be an allusion. The second clause of the verse does in fact (though not in form) give the reason for the prayer contained in the first clause. God is *καρδιογνώστης*, and being a God of knowledge is also a God of justice. He therefore both *can* and *will* requite each one according to his deserts.

10. A personal application to himself of the truth that God "establisheth the righteous." Lit. "My shield is upon God," i.e. my defence rests upon him (as lxii. 7 [8], "my salvation rests upon God,") instead of the more usual form, "God is my shield."

11-16. God's dealing with the unrighteous vividly portrayed.

11. ANGRY, the same word as Nah. i. 2, 6.

12. God is long-suffering, but if a man (if the wicked) will not turn, he will punish him in his wickedness. He whetteth his sword (cf. Deut. xxxii. 41). The first members of this verse might however be rendered in accordance with a well-known Hebrew idiom, "Surely he

(i.e. Jehovah) will again whet his sword." And the first member of verse 13 will then be rendered: "He hath also prepared for himself the weapons of death," etc.

13. YEA FOR (i.e. against) THAT MAN (the pron. is placed first as emphatic) He hath (already) aimed the instruments of death.

14. Not only the justice of God punishes, but the wickedness of the wicked effects his own destruction.

The three verbs, "he travaileth, he hath conceived, he hath brought forth," are not to be explained by an inversion of order in the first two. But the first verb (in the *fut.*) contains the general sentiment (strictly an aorist), which is then further broken up into two parts in the two perfects which follow. "He hath conceived mischief," "he hath brought forth falsehood," are the further extension of the first clause, "he travaileth with iniquity." Both the accents and the tenses point to this as the true interpretation.

15. HE HATH DIGGED A PIT, as a hunter to catch wild animals, but the

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head ;

And his violent dealing shall come down upon his own  
pate.

17 Oh let me give thanks to Jehovah according to his right-  
eousness :

And let me sing (praise to) the name of Jehovah Most  
High.

loose, treacherous soil gives way with him as he digs, or in his haste to catch his prey, he does not notice the lightly covered pitfall, and falls headlong in-  
to it.

16. Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 39.

\* שְׁנִיָּין, probably (from the root שָׁגָה, *errare*), a poem in *irregular* metre, a Dithyrambic poem. "*Ode erratica, Dithyrambus*," Röd. Cf. Hab. iii. 1. The word is of the same form as הִגְגִּיִּן, Higgsaion, ix. 17, and Hupfeld thinks of the same signification, with substitution of ש for ה (הִגָּה = שָׁגָה), so that it would be nothing more than "poem," "psalm" (as indeed the LXX render it, ψαλμός). עַל־הַדָּבָר may either mean *because of*, as in Deut. iv. 21 ; Jer. vii. 22, or literally, *on account of the words of*.

ב וְאַחֲלָצָה צ' ר'. The true interpretation of this clause is doubtful. It may be rendered: (1) "And (if) I have spoiled him that without cause," etc., in which case it forms one in the chain of suppositions which is denied; or (2) in a parenthesis: "Yea (rather) I have delivered him that," etc., the clause then being antithetical to the two preceding. The objection to the first of these renderings is that the verb never occurs in the Piel in the sense of *spoiling*, but always in that of *delivering*. It is true it is found in that sense in the corresponding conjugation of the Syriac, and that the noun הַלִּיצָה means *exuviae*. It is also true that the construction seems to flow more readily on this interpretation. On the other hand the sense is not very satisfactory: if I have rewarded evil to *my friend*, if I have spoiled him that *without cause is my adversary*. It is at least an anti-climax. On the whole, therefore (2), which is the rendering of the E.V., and which is supported by the authority of Aben-Ezra and Kimchi among the ancients, and by such scholars as Ewald and Hupfeld among the moderns, is to be preferred.

Examples of similar parenthesis with וְ, especially with the *fut. paragog.*, are to be found xl. 6; li. 18; lv. 13.

עֲרִיכָה. A sort of hybrid form, half Kal, half Piel. The requirements of rhythm may possibly account for its introduction here. Or

it may be a corrupted form יִרְרֶה (like תִּפְלֶה, Jer. xxii. 5, יִצְחַק, Gen. xxi. 6). See Gesen., § 114. 2; Ewald, § 224 a.

<sup>d</sup> עָלַי. We may either understand יִרְרֶה, sc. “let it be done unto me:” or the expression may (like נִפְשִׁי עָלַי)=“my integrity *which is* in me,” *quae est penes me*.

<sup>e</sup> וּבִהְיֶה. The sentence runs literally: “And a trier of the hearts and reins is the righteous God.” This, in fact, gives the reason for the prayer and the hope expressed just before; so that the הֵי is here equivalent to *for*, just as in the same participial construction, xxii. 29; lv. 20. We may, however, supply the pron. of the 2d person as virtually contained in the previous imperative, “For thou that triest the hearts and reins art a righteous God”; or, “For thou, O righteous God, triest,” etc. Similar omissions of the pron. occur, of the 2d pers. in Hab. ii. 15, and of the 1st pers. in Hab. i. 5, in both of which cases it may be supplied from the suffix following. In the latter many would retain the 3d person.

<sup>f</sup> לְלִלְקִים = לְקִים (Lat. *malleoli*), arrows wrapped round with some inflammable material, which became ignited in their passage through the air, and set afire whatever they lighted upon. Sim., βέλη πεπυρωμένα, Eph. vi. 16.

<sup>g</sup> יִפֹּל בְּשׁוֹרֵף. The verb as in ver. 13 [14]. Strictly a present: “which he is now in the act of making.” But then we ought rather to read יִפֹּל, “and he shall fall.” I have endeavored to preserve in the translation something of the play upon sound in this passage.

<sup>h</sup> רִפְּעָל. The change in tense is noticeable, — the act of preparing the arrows is described as going on = “whilst he makes his arrows fiery arrows.” The succession of tenses in ver. 12, 13, is worthy of observation.

## PSALM VIII.

This is the first of a number of Psalms which celebrate the praise of God in the phenomena of the natural world. The sun by day (Ps. xix.), the moon and the stars by night (Ps. viii.), the glory and the order of creation (Ps. civ.), the terrors of the thunder-storm and the earthquake (Ps. xxix.), are all dwelt upon in Hebrew verse, and are described with a force and animation, a magnificence of imagination and coloring, which have never been surpassed in the poetry of any nation.



But the Hebrew odes are never merely descriptive. There are pictures in them of extreme beauty and vividness, but the picture is never painted for its own sake. Nature is never regarded, whether in her aspect of terror or of grace, whether in her tumult or her repose, as an end in herself. The sense of God's presence of which the Psalmist is so profoundly conscious in his own spiritual life is that which gives its glory and its meaning to the natural world. There is a vivid realization of that presence as of a presence which fills the world, and from which there is no escape; there is a closeness to God, as of one who holds and compasses us about (Ps. cxxxix.), in the mind of the inspired minstrels of Israel, which, if it is characteristic of the Semitic races at large, is certainly in an emphatic degree characteristic of the Hebrews. This feeling lends its coloring to their poetry. Nature is full of God; nature is the theatre of his glory. All admiration of nature in a rightly tuned heart is a confession of that glory. To such a heart there can be no praise of nature apart from the praise of God. All things are "of him and through him and to him." The sun and the moon are his witnesses and heralds, the light is his robe, the clouds are his chariot, the thunder is his voice, the flashes of the lightning are his arrows and his spear. Apart from him the universe is void and waste; he gives it its life and meaning.

This eighth Psalm describes the impression produced on the heart of David as he gazed upon the heavens by night. In such a country as Palestine, in that clear Eastern atmosphere, "the moon and the stars" would appear with a splendor and a brilliancy of which we can scarcely conceive; and as he fixes his eyes upon them, awed and solemnized, and yet attracted and inspired, by the spectacle, he breaks forth into admiring acknowledgment of that God, who, as the God of Israel, has set his glory so conspicuously in the heavens that it is seen of all eyes and confessed even by the lisping tongues of children. They praise him, and their scarcely articulate homage is a rebuke to wicked men who disregard or resist him.

But as the poet gazes on into the liquid depths of that starry sky, there comes upon him with overwhelming force the sense of his own insignificance. In sight of all that vastness, before all that evidence of creative power, how insignificant is man. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" is the natural utterance of the heart. What is man, — man in his frailty, his littleness, his sin? What in the sight of him who made those heavens, and planted in them those glittering orbs? This is the first feeling; but it is immediately swallowed up in another, — the consciousness of man's true greatness, in nature all but divine, of

the seed-royal of the second Adam, of highest lineage and dignity, crowned and sceptred as a king: "thou hast put all things under his feet." This is the principal thought: not man's littleness, but his greatness. This subject is boldly but briefly handled, and then the Psalm is brought to a fitting close with the same ascription of praise with which it opened.

Nearly all critics are unanimous in regarding this as one of David's Psalms. There is more difference of opinion as to the time when it was composed. The Psalm furnishes us with no notes of time; but there are indications of another kind which may serve to guide us.

David, it may almost certainly be said, is still young; he has not yet been schooled by sorrow; he has not yielded to temptations which have darkened his heart; he has no personal enemies to contend with. The only enemies who for a moment cross his thought are the fierce and turbulent men who set themselves up against *God*, the revilers and contemners of his majesty, the men who *will not* behold his glory, plainly as it is manifested in creation. It may be fanciful to see in the allusion to children and sucklings a reference to the youth of David; but there can be no doubt that the freshness of spirit, the joyousness of tone, which pervade the Psalm are such as would lead us naturally to associate it with his earlier years. It is undimmed by memories of sin; it bears no trace of struggle and anguish. There is a buoyant faith; there is the natural sense of wonder; there is joyful acknowledgment of God; there is the consciousness of man's high destiny as created in the image of God. The thought of man's royal prerogatives, of his kingly rule over creation, is no doubt derived from the early and simple record in the first chapter of Genesis, a record with which David must have been familiar. This Psalm has, indeed, been called the "lyric echo" of that chapter; a title, however, which might more aptly be given to the one hundred and fourth Psalm. But this sovereignty of man is just one of those points on which, it has been truly remarked,<sup>1</sup> a high-souled, youthful poet would most naturally dwell. There are touches in the Psalm which might even lead us to connect it with David's shepherd life. He may have written it while he was keeping "those few sheep in the wilderness," "far from men, but near to God," whiling away the hours of his night-watch in contemplation of the heavens, and in communion with his Maker. Nor do I see why such a supposition as to the origin of the Psalm should be described as "extremely improbable."<sup>2</sup> At the

<sup>1</sup> By Mr. Maclaren, "Life of David, in his Psalms," in Sunday at Home for 1871, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> "Höchst unwahrscheinlich." Moll, in Lange's Bibelwerk.

same time it must be admitted that the language of verse 2 implies a larger acquaintance with the world than we can suppose David's life at Bethlehem to have furnished.

The conjecture that the Psalm was written after his combat with Goliath turns no doubt on a false interpretation of the inscription, but it rests also partly on the contrast in verse 2 between "children" and "the enemy." This reference, however, is scarcely now maintained by any critic of eminence.

One thing seems clear : that even if the Psalm were not written during David's shepherd life, it must, at least, have been written while the memory of that time was fresh in his heart, and before the bitter experience of his later years had bowed and saddened his spirit. Beyond this we cannot speak with anything like certainty.

The Messianic import of the Psalm is not of a direct kind. It is, however, necessarily implied in that mysterious relation of man to God and that kingship over the inferior creatures of which the Psalm speaks, for this rests upon the incarnation. Man is what he is, because the Son of God has taken upon him man's nature. Man is very near to God, higher than the angels, because the Christ is both God and man. This is the profound truth on which the Messianic character of the Psalm depends. This truth is the key to its interpretation.

But it does not follow that David saw this distinctly. He takes what must in any case be the *religious* view of creation, and of man's relation to God on the one hand, and to the inferior animals on the other. Some interpreters, indeed, have thought that David is describing not man's actual position, marred and broken by the fall, but his original condition as created in the image of God. It is the ideal, it is the design and purpose of God, which for the moment hides from his sight the havoc and confusion which have been wrought by sin — the broken sceptre and the discrowned king. Others, again, think that the whole Psalm is prophetic, or rather predictive. They conceive that it tells us what man shall be hereafter — redeemed and restored in the second Adam to his rightful supremacy.

But the language of the Psalm, taken in its obvious sense, favors neither of these interpretations. David is manifestly speaking of the present. He sees the heavens witnessing for God ; he sees man placed by God as ruler upon earth ; he feels how high an honor has been put upon man ; he marvels at God's grace and condescension. Man is king, however his authority may be questioned or defied.

When we turn to the New Testament, where verses of this Psalm are twice applied to Christ (besides our Lord's own quotation of ver. 2),

we see at once the principle on which the quotations rest. It is precisely that which I have already laid down. The incarnation explains it. In 1 Cor. xv. 27, St. Paul quotes, with a slight change,—using the third person instead of the second,—the words of verse 6, “Thou hast put all things under his feet,” as describing accurately the complete subjection of the universe to Christ. The words may be true of man, but they are in their highest sense only true of Christ as the great head of mankind, and of man only in him. Similarly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 6–9) argues that the words “Thou hast put all things under his feet” have not yet been literally fulfilled of man, and declares that their proper fulfilment is to be seen only in Jesus, whom God had made “a little lower than the angels,”<sup>1</sup> and had “crowned

<sup>1</sup> That the quotation should be made so as to agree with the LXX, rather than the Hebrew, is characteristic of the writer of the Epistle, and is in itself a matter of little moment; for, as Calvin observes, “we know what liberty the Apostles allowed themselves in citing passages of Scripture; not, indeed, that they twisted them to a sense at variance with the true one, but because it was enough for them to indicate (*digito monstrare*) that their teaching was confirmed by the oracles of God. Wherefore, provided the main point was adhered to (*modo de summa re constaret*), they did not hesitate to alter a word here and there.” But there is, as he points out, a greater difficulty than the mere substitution of “angels” for “God” in this quotation. For David is speaking of man’s greatness as being little less than divine; the writer of the Epistle applies the passage to the humiliation of Christ. Now first, what is said of man is applied to Christ, because he is not only “the first-born of all creation,” but also because he is the second head of the human race. All the riches of glory which the Father has bestowed upon him in his human nature, he has bestowed on him for our sakes. Out of his fulness we all receive. And if it be said that the exclamation of astonishment, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” cannot apply to Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Calvin replies, that so far as the human nature of Christ is concerned, all that has been bestowed upon it has been bestowed freely, and that in this mirror the mercy of God is most brightly reflected, that a mortal man and a son of Adam is also the only Son of God, and the Lord of glory and the head of the angels. As to the other point, that it is the humiliation, and not the greatness, which forms the point of the quotation in Heb. ii. 7, this Calvin remarks, “is not an interpretation, but the writer turns to his own purpose (*ad suum institutum deflectit*) κατ’ ἐπεξεργασίαν, what had been said in a different sense. In like manner St. Paul deals, in Rom. x. 6, with the words of Moses in Deut. xxx. 22. The apostle, therefore, did not merely have an eye to David’s meaning, but, in allusion to the two ideas of humiliation and glory, referred the one to the death, the other to the resurrection of Christ. Similarly, in quoting Ps. lxviii. 19, in Eph. iv. 8, St. Paul does not so much give an interpretation as, with a pious turn, apply the passage to the person of Christ (*pia deflexione ad Christi personam accommodat*).”

Still it is important to bear in mind that the writer of the Epistle does not set aside the reference to *man* in the Psalm. On the contrary, he admits it, and bases his argument upon it. The Psalm speaks of man, tells us of the great things



with glory and honor." He does not make use of the Psalm as a direct prediction, but he shows that man's place in creation is his in Christ: his destiny as depicted in the Psalm is not, and cannot be, accomplished out of Christ. He is the true Lord of all. In him man reigns; in him man shall yet be restored to his rightful lordship, and shall really and completely be in the new world of redemption (*ἡ οἰκουμένη ἢ μέλλουσα*) what now he is but very imperfectly — God's vicegerent; ruling a subject creation in peace and harmony and love.

[For the Precentor. Upon the Gittith.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm of David.]

1 JEHOVAH, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth,

Who hast set<sup>b</sup> thy glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of children and sucklings thou hast founded strength,

Because of thine adversaries,

That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

1. OUR LORD. For the first time in the Book of Psalms the personal feeling is lost sight of in the national. Jehovah is not the God of David only, but of Israel: fitting prelude to a Psalm which forgets the individual in the contemplation of God's glory in the universe. The thought which here appears is, in fact, the thought which is the key to the Book of Genesis, and indeed to the whole history of the Old Testament. The God who makes himself known to Israel by his name Jehovah, as their Redeemer, is the God who created the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth.

2. CHILDREN, not "babes," as the E.V.; they are more advanced in age than the SUCKLINGS; so that there is a kind of climax, "not children only, but sucklings." As Hebrew mothers did not wean their children till they were

three years old, this is no mere figure of speech.

THOU HAST FOUNDED STRENGTH, i.e. Thou hast built up a bulwark, a defence, etc. The LXX, *κατηρτίσω αἶνον*, and Jerome, *fecisti laudem*, are clearly wrong; Aq., rightly, *ἐθεμελίωσας κράτος*. Cf. Jer. xvi. 19.

When expositors introduce here the teaching of 1 Cor. i. 26–28, they depart from the simple language of the Psalm. David speaks *literally* of children. And so our Lord himself applies the words, Matt. xxi. 16. Even the faith of a little child is bulwark enough against the folly of men of corrupt heart and perverted intellect. The stars above, and the lips of infants below, show forth his praise.

THE ENEMY AND THE AVENGER occurs again, xlv. 17. "Avenger" in modern English hardly conveys the sense of the

God had done for him — putting a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand, and making him little less than the angels in glory and power. Now the writer says, "All this has never been fully accomplished in man hitherto; the great idea and purpose of his creation has never been fulfilled but in the one perfect man — in him who first stooped to put on human nature, and then was raised in that nature to lordship over all creation."

- 3 When I see thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,  
 The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained ;—
- 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him,  
 And the son of man, that thou visitest him ?
- 5 And thou hast made him a little lower<sup>e</sup> than God,  
 And crownest him with glory and honor.

Hebrew word; it denotes "one who thirsts for or breathes revenge; one who is swift to avenge his own quarrel"; *der Rache schnaubt*, as Mendelssohn renders it.

3. David has spoken generally of the glory of Jehovah, as seen in the earth and the heavens, and which is so conspicuous that even children can discern and acknowledge it; he now passes to a particular instance of its manifestation, and one of the most impressive, and draws thence the lesson of God's marvellous condescension.

WHEN I SEE, i.e. "as often as I see" ... (then the thought arises within me, or then I say) "What is man?" etc. Cf. cxliv. 3, and for similar expressions as denoting a like sense of unworthiness, 1 Sam. xviii. 18; 2 Sam. vii. 18.

4. WHAT IS MAN? The first feeling is an overpowering sense of man's insignificance in presence of the vastness and splendor, the mysterious depth, and the exceeding glory of the heavens, as seen at night. "The vault of the sky, arched at a vast and unknown distance over our heads; the stars apparently infinite in number, each keeping its appointed place and course, and seeming to belong to a wide system of things which has no relation to the earth; while man is but one among many millions of the earth's inhabitants; all this makes the contemplative spectator feel how exceedingly small a portion of the universe he is; how little he must be in the eyes of an Intelligence which can embrace the whole." Add to this revelation of darkness the revelation of silence,—the man is alone; the stir and noise of his own works, which in the light of day filled and absorbed him, are hushed and buried in darkness; his

importance is gone;—and "every person in every age and country will recognize as irresistibly natural the train of thought expressed by the Hebrew Psalmist." It is needless to remark, if this be the feeling of the untaught mind, how infinitely the impression must be deepened in one who looks upon the universe with the aid of astronomical discovery and theory. Such a person may well feel "lost, confounded, overwhelmed, with the vastness of the spectacle" ... "the distance between him and the Creator appears to be increased beyond measure by this disclosure. It seems as if a single individual could have no chance and no claim for the regard of the Ruler of the whole." (Whewell, *Astronomy*, etc., Book iii., chap. iii.)

MAN. The Hebrew word denotes man in his weakness and frailty (see ix. 19, 20), as in the next member SON OF MAN (son of Adam) refers also to his earthly nature, as formed out of the ground.

5. But through God's marvellous condescension, how *great* is man; little less than divine in nature, and lord of all creation.

A LITTLE LOWER, lit, "And thou hast made him to want but little (or, to come short but little) of God."

A LITTLE, i.e. in *degree*—whereas the *βραχύ τι* of the LXX, as applied to Christ, may possibly, though by no means certainly (see Alford on Heb. ii. 7) refer to *time*. "Thou madest him for a little time lower," etc.

THAN GOD. The LXX *ηλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους*. And so of course in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which quotes the Alexandrian text. So also the Targum and the Jewish in-

6 Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ;

Thou hast put all things under his feet :

7 Sheep <sup>a</sup> and oxen, all of them,

Yea, and the beasts of the field,

8 The fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea,

(And whatsoever) passeth <sup>e</sup> through the paths of the seas.

9 Jehovah, our Lord,

How excellent is thy name in all the earth !

terpreters generally. And so the E. V. "than the angels." But there is obviously a reference in ver. 6 to Gen. i. 26, and therefore here, doubtless, an allusion to the creation of man in the image of God. Besides, the word *Elohim* (God) nowhere occurs in the sense of *angels*. The phrase is *sons of God*. On the other hand, *Elohim* expresses the abstract idea of Godhead, Divine nature, and so (without the article) that which is god-like, superhuman, Zech. xii. 8 and 1 Sam. xxviii. 13. Hence Hengst. translates rightly : "Wenig unter göttlichen Stand erniedrigst du ihn." Cf. Cicero's "*Homo mortalis Deus*."

GLORY AND HONOR. A common expression for the divine majesty, and thence for the kingly, as a reflection of the divine. The former word etymologically means dignity, as that which is *weighty* ; the latter represents the external show and splendor.

"*Equidem non dubito*," says Calvin, "*quin praeclaras dotes commendet, quae declarent homines ad imaginem Dei formatos esse, et creatos ad spem beatæ vitæ et immortalis. Nam quod ratione præditi sunt, qua discernant inter bonum et malum, quod illis inditum est religionis semen, quod mutua est inter eos communicatio, sacris quibusdam vinculis astricta, quod inter eos viget honesti respectus et pudor, et legum moderatio ; hæc non obscura sunt summæ et coelestis sapientiæ signa.*"

6. Man is a king. God has put a crown upon his head, and not only so, but has given him a territory and sub-

jects. "All things under his feet," with evident reference to the "let them have dominion," of Gen. i. 26. What David means by "all things" is then explained — beasts, birds, and fishes, which are in the same manner enumerated in Gen. i. St. Paul, however, extends the meaning of the "all things" far beyond this. Jesus, as the true Lord of all, shall have a universal dominion. He must reign till he have put all enemies under his feet. But as yet we see not all things put under him. Sin and death and hell are up in arms against him, and these are yet to be subdued. Death, says the apostle, is the last enemy which shall be destroyed. It is evident, then, that David's "all things" and Paul's "all things" are not the same. The one is thinking of the visible world, the other of the invisible. The one is praising God for his goodness to man, in making him lord over beasts and birds and fishes ; the other is thinking of a conflict with principalities and powers, which Christ conquers, and which man can only conquer in Christ. The one speaks of that which is, the other of that which is to come.

9. The Psalm closes with the same expression of loving admiration with which it opened, but with added emphasis after the singer has told the tale of God's goodness to man ; just as the repetition of a passage in music falls more sensibly on the ear, and touches the heart with quicker emotions, than the same passage when it first occurs.





centia tua." The Arab. follows the LXX in giving the passive. The choice, therefore, seems to lie between (3) and (4). In Zunz's Bible the construction is carried on into the next verse: "Du, dessen Glanz über den Himmeln man verkündet, Hast aus dem Munde der Kinder und Säuglinge dir Sieg gegründet," etc. In the Arab. the construction is similar.

<sup>c</sup> וַתִּבְרָאֵהוּ. The change in tense here (fut. consec.) takes us back to the original act — the creation of man; but only so as to mark that the divine act abides in force. Hence we have 6*a* perfect (fut. with ו consec.), 6*b* and 7*a* present, 7*b* perfect. Throughout, David speaks of what man is in the present, though with a glance at the first creation. Hupfeld was certainly wrong when in his 1st ed. he translated all the verbs in ver. 5–7 as *preterites*, and supposed the Psalmist to be referring throughout to the original creation of man. In his 2d ed. he has corrected this, and renders the tenses as past and present respectively.

<sup>d</sup> The language in ver. 7, 8 is highly poetical. צִנּוֹה instead of the prosaic צָנַח, אֶלְפִים instead of בָּקָר, בְּהֵמוֹת שָׂרִי instead of הַיָּת הָאֲרֶץ, and שָׂרִי instead of שָׂרָה. Even צִפּר ש' is instead of the more common עֲרָה ה'.

<sup>e</sup> עִבֵּר. The part. *sing.*, in apposition therefore (as a sort of neuter collective), not in agreement with רִגִי ה'. So LXX, τὰ διαπορευόμενα; Oeth., *quicquid* ambulat. "The paths of the seas," cf. the Homeric ὑγρὰ κέλευθα.

## PSALM IX.

A THANKSGIVING to God, the righteous Judge, who punishes the wicked, and defends the cause of the oppressed. Throughout, with the exception of verse 13 (see note there), the Psalm is one continued strain of triumph. Hence, by many it has been regarded as a song of victory, composed, perhaps, by David at the conclusion of the Syro-Ammonite war, or after one of his victories over the Philistines.

From the times of the LXX this Psalm has often been considered as forming one poem with the Psalm immediately following. This has arisen, probably, from the fact that the tenth Psalm has no superscription, an uncommon thing in the first book, as well as from the alphabetical arrangement, partially at least discernible in both Psalms, and certain phrases and turns of expression found in both, and not found elsewhere. (See Critical Notes.) But this last circumstance only proves that the two Psalms are to be referred to the same author,

not that they originally constituted one poem. And the alphabetical arrangement is exceedingly imperfect, especially in the tenth Psalm; nor does it properly complete the defective portion of Psalm ix. Whereas, if we look to the general character of the two,—the first, all triumph and hope; the last, all prayer against the deeds of violence and blood, which the poet mourns over,—the Hebrew division must certainly be allowed to have much in its favor.

The strophical arrangement is as follows :

I. (א) Resolve to praise Jehovah (ver. 1, 2).

II. (ב, ג, ד) Reason for this: viz. his righteousness as manifested (a) personally (ver 3, 4); (b) generally (ver. 5, 6).

III. (ה) Moreover, Jehovah is the only true and everlasting Judge (ver. 7, 8), and therefore not only the destroyer of the wicked, but the fortress of those that trust in him (ver. 9, 10).

IV. (ו) An exhortation to praise Jehovah because of this his righteousness (ver. 11, 12).

V. (ז) Prayer that this righteousness may be manifested to the singer himself personally (ver. 13, 14).

VI. (ח) The destruction of the nations, by being taken in their own devices, a witness to God's righteousness (ver. 15, 16).

VII. (ט) Further amplification of this destruction as contrasted with the hope of the poor (ver. 17, 18).

VIII. (י) A prayer that God would yet again declare the majesty of his righteousness, as he had already done in times past (ver. 19, 20).

[For the Precentor. To the tune "Death of the Son." <sup>a</sup> A Psalm of David.]

א 1 I WILL give thanks unto Jehovah with my whole heart,  
I will tell of all thy wonderful works ;

2 I will be glad and exult in thee,  
I will sing to thy name, O thou Most High.

ב 3 Because <sup>b</sup> mine enemies are turned backward,  
(Because) they stumble and perish at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause,  
Thou hast sat down on (the) throne, a righteous Judge.

1, 2. In this first strophe each line "sing psalms" (E. V. "sing praises"). begins with the first letter of the The verb is from the same root as the alphabet (א). noun *mizmor*, "psalm," and means both

2. SING, rendered in our P. B. V. "to sing" and "to play."

5 Thou hast rebuked (the) nations, thou hast destroyed  
the wicked ;

Their name hast thou blotted out for ever and ever.

6 The enemy is cut off, — they are perpetual ruins ;

And cities which thou hast rooted out, — the very  
memorial of them is perished.

7 And Jehovah sitteth (as King) for ever,

He hath prepared his throne for judgment :

8 And he will judge the world in righteousness,

He will minister justice to the peoples in uprightness,

9 That so Jehovah may be a high tower to them that are  
crushed,<sup>c</sup>

A fortress in times of trouble.

10 And they who know thy name shall trust in thee,

Because thou hast not forsaken them that seek thee,

O Jehovah.

4. MAINTAINED MY RIGHT, lit. "executed my judgment."

6. THE ENEMY IS CUT OFF. There can be no doubt that the sing. noun is here to be regarded as a collective, and so taken with the plural verb ; cf. Isa. xvi. 4 ; Prov. xxviii. 1, etc., and for the noun with art. preceding the verb, as here, Judg. xx. 37. The construction is the same in that much misquoted and misinterpreted passage, Hag. ii. 7, "And the desirable things," i.e. delights, treasures, etc. (noun collect. sing.), "of all nations shall come," i.e. into the temple (verb plural). It is quite impossible, without doing violence to the plainest rules of grammar, to interpret that passage of the Messiah. The fact that the verb is in the plural settles the question. Besides, the context (v. 8), "Mine is the silver, and mine the gold," etc., shows what the desirable things are.

THEY ARE RUINS ; or rather, perhaps, SO AS TO BECOME RUINS FOR EVER, these words being a further predicate, enlarging the idea contained in the verb "cut off." May they not, however, be

a predicate by anticipation of the sentence following ?

THE VERY MEMORIAL, lit. "their memorial is perished — (even) they themselves." The pron. is thus repeated in order to produce the greatest possible emphasis (exactly parallel are Num. xiv. 32 ; Prov. xxiii. 15 ; see also 1 Sam. xx. 42 ; Prov. xxii. 19 ; Ezek. xxxiv. 11 ; Hag. i. 4). The antithesis, which accounts for this emphasis, is to be found in the following verse : "The enemy has been utterly annihilated, whilst Jehovah remains King for ever."

8. He (emphatically) and not any human judge ; the world shall yet see a rule of righteousness.

JUDGE . . . MINISTER JUSTICE. On the difference between the two words, of which the latter is the more formal and technical, see note on lxxii. 2.

9. THAT SO, i.e. by virtue of his righteous exercise of judgment. MAY BE, or rather MAY BECOME, i.e. "prove himself to be" a place of refuge and security.

10. WHO KNOW THY NAME. See notes on i. 6 ; v. 11. THEM THAT SEEK

- 7 11 Sing ye to Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion,  
 Declare among the peoples his doings ;  
 12 For he who requireth blood remembereth them,  
 He hath not forgotten the cry of the afflicted.<sup>d</sup>  
 13 Be gracious<sup>e</sup> unto me, O Jehovah,  
 See mine affliction (which I suffer) from them that  
 hate me,  
 O thou that lifest me up from the gates of death,  
 14 That so I may tell all thy praise<sup>f</sup> in the gates of the  
 daughter of Zion,  
 That I may exult in thy saving help.  
 15 The nations have sunk down in the pit that they made ;  
 In the net which<sup>g</sup> they hid is their own foot taken.

THEE, not to be paraphrased coldly, that honor thee, worship thee, etc. They who seek *God*, seek *him* for himself; not like the worshippers of heathen deities, who ask for other things of their gods — wealth, honor, power, etc.

11. Jehovah dwells in Zion. There is the visible seat of his dominion; but that dominion extends to the whole earth — therefore “publish among the nations his doings.” Jehovah is “the Dweller in Zion” since the ark was brought thither, lxxvi. 3.

12. REQUIRETH, or “maketh inquisition for blood” (E. V.), i.e. “demandeth satisfaction for bloodshed.” This is God’s character, as opposed to the scoff of the wicked, “He *requireth* not,” x. 4, 13 (where the same verb is used). Like the Goël, the next of kin, who was bound to avenge the murder of his kinsman, so God *calls* the murderer to account, *requires satisfaction* at his hand, Gen. ix. 5; Deut. xviii. 19; and in a spiritual sense, Ezek. xxxiii. 6, 8; xxxiv. 10.

THEM, i.e. “the afflicted,” in the next clause, the pronoun being placed first emphatically.

THE AFFLICTED. This seems at least the primary notion of the word and its kindred form, though they ac-

quire also a moral signification, “the meek, the humble.” The *afflicted* in the first instance would be the faithful part of the nation persecuted and oppressed by the ungodly and the powerful, and (2) the nation itself, trodden down by foreign tyrants. In either case it is they who, through this very discipline, learn meekness, submission, resignation, who “in patience possess their souls.” In scarcely any instance is the primary meaning altogether in abeyance. In Num. xii. 3, where our version has “Now the man Moses was very *meek*,” etc., the other rendering, *afflicted*, is certainly more in harmony with the context. (See also Num. xi. 11–15; Deut. i. 12). And so Luther: “Der Mann war *geplagt* vor allen Menschen.”

13, 14. These two verses, according to Delitzsch, contain the cry of the afflicted. If we take them as the prayer of the singer himself, they disturb, he thinks, the unity of the Psalm, and interfere awkwardly with its general strain of triumph. But this sudden change of feeling is not uncommon in the Psalms, and the thought of God as the avenger of all the oppressed, naturally drew forth the prayer that he would look graciously upon the Psalmist himself.

14. IN THE GATES, etc. As the most



16 Jehovah hath made himself known, he hath executed judgment;

In the work of his own hands doth he snare<sup>h</sup> the wicked. [Higgaion — Selah.]

י 17 The wicked must return to the unseen world,  
(Even) all the nations that forget God.

ב 18 For not for ever shall the poor be forgotten;  
The hope of the afflicted shall not perish eternally.

19 Arise, O Jehovah, let not mortal man be strong;  
Let the nations be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear,<sup>i</sup> O Jehovah;  
Let the nations know that they are but mortal men.<sup>k</sup>  
[Selah.]

public place of concourse, this being in the East what the *ἀγορά* was to the Greeks, and the *forum* to the Romans.

17. MUST RETURN. Not “*be turned*,” as E. V. The biblical idea is that of a returning to the dust, taken from the original passage in Gen. iii. 19. Cf. Job. xxx. 23, of a return to Sheol (i.e. Hades, the unseen world), as here and Ps. xc. 3: “Thou makest man return to destruction,” expressions only to be ex-

plained by the dimness which then hung over the grave and the life beyond it. The meaning is, that even now, before the eyes of men, God’s righteousness shall be seen in cutting off the wicked by a sudden and premature end, and helping and exalting the righteous.

19. ARISE. A solemn appeal to God to show himself to be that which he is, — the Judge of the earth, with reference, perhaps, to Num. x. 35. Cf. Ps. iii. 8; vii. 7.

(1.) The following is a list of certain turns of expression characteristic of this and the next Psalm: the very peculiar phrase לְעִתּוֹת בְּצָרָה, “in times of trouble,” ix. [10] (see note), x. 1; קָדַח, “the crushed,” ix. 9 [10]; x. 18 (only occurring besides lxxiv. 21); אֲנוֹשׁ (in this special sense), “mortal men,” 19, 20 [20, 21]; x. 18; טָבַח with אֲנוֹשׁ, ix. [13], [19]; x. 12, with לְנֶצַח, ix. [19]; x. 11; זֶה, ix. [16]; x. 2; וְעַד, ix. [6]; x. 16; קִיָּמָה, ix. [20]; x. 12 (concluding both Psalms). Both Psalms end with the same prayer against *weak (mortal) men*; both anticipate the judgment and overthrow of the (heathen) nations, וְשָׁשׁוּ גוֹיִם, ix. 19 [20], אֲבָדוּ גוֹיִם, x. 16.

(2.) As regards the alphabetical arrangement it is exceedingly irregular. Ver. [2, 3] begin with א; ver. [4] with ב; ver. [6] with ג; the letter ד is wanting, and ver. [7] begins with ה; we have then four verses beginning with ו, and not till verse [12] do we find ז; ver. [14] ח; ver. [16] ט; ver. [18] י; ver. [19] כ. The alphabetical order

ceases here, and does not reappear, unless the ל in x. 1 is part of the alphabetical arrangement, till ver. 12 of the next Psalm, where (the six intervening letters having been left out) we find ק, ר, ש, ת, concluding the Psalm.

<sup>a</sup> The title has been much discussed, but with little satisfactory result. The older Jewish commentators found in לִבֵּן a proper name, as if the Psalm were on the death of one *Ben*, according to Kimchi, the Levitical singer mentioned 1 Chron. xv. 18. Others suppose Absalom to be meant, and render it "On the death of the son." But it is better to take the prep. עַל in its usual meaning in such cases, as denoting "after the manner of"; and the words which follow, as indicating some other poem beginning "Die for the son," or "Death of the son," to the music of which this was to be set.

<sup>b</sup> The older versions, without exception, take the prep. כִּי here as a prep. of *time*, = "when" or "whilst (i.e. now that) mine enemies," etc.; the Anglo-Saxon being the first, so far as I know, which takes it in a causative sense, "Fortham thu gewhyrdest," etc., Because, etc. But in any case this verse is connected immediately with the preceding, and clause (b) continues the construction in clause (a), the finite verb as usual taking the place of the inf. with the prep. (Gesen., § 129, Rem. 2). Perhaps the temporal and causative meaning of the prep. may both be combined, as in the Lat. abl. absol.

<sup>c</sup> קָהָה, lit. one who is crushed to powder (ר. רַבָּה = רַבָּה, רַבָּה). In בַּצָּרָה the ב is not servile, as Gesen. asserts; but it is one word, from ר. בָּצַר, *coercuit*, formed from the Piel, as בִּקְשָׁה from בָּקַשׁ, etc. Literally it means, therefore, "the state of being shut up, cut off from resources," etc. and is kindred with בַּצָּרָה (Jer. xvii. 8), "drought," *cohibitio*, sc. *pluviae*. Ewald would give the same meaning here.

<sup>d</sup> עֲנִיִּים. So the K'ri, as correction of the K'thibh עֲנִיִּים. Just the contrary verse 19. See also x. 12. These seem quite arbitrary corrections. Generally it is supposed that עֲנִי refers to external condition, "one who is bowed down, i.e. oppressed, afflicted"; עֲנִי, to the inner spirit, "one who is meek, gentle," etc. (ταπεινός, παῖς). But this distinction rests chiefly on the fact that the abstr. עֲנָוָה means "meekness," and that in the Targums עֲנָוָה (= עֲנִי) means "afflicted"; and עֲנָוָה (= עֲנִי) "meek." It is not clearly established by biblical usage, for it is often impossible to say in the use of either word which meaning was uppermost in the writer's mind; the one passes, indeed, readily into the other, the afflicted being also the lowly of heart. (See more on these words in Hupfeld's note.)

<sup>e</sup> חֲנִינִי, an unusual form for חֲנִי. According to another reading

חֲנִינִי, which Kimchi also prefers, making it, however, wrongly imper. Piel. It is imper. Kal, from an intr. form חָנַן.

<sup>f</sup> תַּחֲלִיתִךְ, a sing. noun with plur. suffix (as Ezek. xxxv. 11, טַחֲלִיתֶיךָ, and xvi. 51, 55, 61, אַחֲלִיתֶיךָ; see also Isa. xlvii. 13), but apparently a Masoretic freak, unless as Hitzig (Prov. vi. 3) suggests, the ך was intended in the absence of vowels to mark the pausal forms of the noun with Segol. Others, as Kimchi, have supposed the existence of a masc. plur. תַּחֲלִיתִים, from the fem. sing. תַּחֲלִיתָ, of which, however, there is no proof.

<sup>g</sup> זֶה, the old demonstrative form here used as a relative.

<sup>h</sup> נִקְשׁ is clearly the part. Kal from a *r.* נָקַשׁ, not a Niph. for נִקְשׁ as if from יִקְשׁ.

<sup>i</sup> מוֹרָא, apparently incorrectly written for מוֹרֵא, "fear," or perhaps a "terrible example." The LXX, Syr., and Vulg. seem to have read מוֹרֵא, and render accordingly, "set a teacher or master over them."

<sup>k</sup> אָנוּשׁ, used here and in the preceding verse to denote man in his frailty and impotence; hence the oxymoron, verse 20, אֲלֵךְ יָעֹז אָנוּשׁ, "let not *weak* man carry himself as if he were *strong*."

## PSALM X.

THE Psalmist calls upon God to chastise the unbridled insolence and scorn of the wicked. These have reached such a pitch that it seems as if God winked at evil. Men are not only doing wickedness, but boasting of their wickedness; and, finding that justice does not overtake them, are acting as if in the conviction that there is no God. The prosperity (ver. 5), security (ver. 6), insolence (ver. 4, 11), deceit (ver. 7), and violence (ver. 8–10) of these despisers of God is vividly portrayed. The Psalm concludes with the triumphant assertion of faith, that despite all seeming disorders, Jehovah *is* King, and that he does hear and answer the cry of the oppressed.

It is impossible to say to what period of Jewish history the Psalm is to be referred. The state of society which it supposes is peculiar. The violent oppressors belonged apparently to heathen nations, who had not yet been finally driven out of the land, but whose speedy destruction the poet anticipates (ver. 16). Compare Psalm ix. 15, 16 [16, 17]. In that Psalm, too, in a still more marked manner than in this, "the wicked" and "the (heathen) nations" are identified. See verses 5 [6], 17 [18], 19, 20 [20, 21]. The only limit of time is that furnished by

Psalm ix. 11 [12], 14 [15], from which it is certain that the ark had already been placed on Mount Zion.

On the connection between these two Psalms see the Introduction and notes to Psalm ix.

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions :

I. The first contains a forcible description of the wicked in the full maturity both of his impiety and of his power, together with a complaint to God against him. Ver. 1-11.

II. The second is an appeal to God to arise and show himself the avenger of the oppressed and the destroyer of the proud. Ver. 12-18.

### I. 1 WHY, O Jehovah, standest thou afar off ?

(Why) hidest thou (thine eyes) in times of trouble ?

2 Through the pride of the wicked the afflicted is hotly vexed ;

They are taken in the devices they have imagined.

3 For the wicked boasteth of <sup>a</sup> his soul's desire,

And he blesseth the robber ; <sup>b</sup> he despiseth Jehovah.

1. STANDEST ... AFAR OFF, i.e. like an idle, passive spectator, unconcerned at the misery which he sees, but refuses to relieve. See xxii. 2, 12, 20 ; xxxv. 22 ; xxxviii. 12, 22.

HIDEST, viz. "thine eyes." So the ellipse is to be supplied. See Isa. i. 15. The same phrase is used of men who leave wickedness unpunished (Lev. xx. 4 ; 1 Sam. xii. 3), or who disregard the misery of others (Prov. xxviii. 27). LXX, ὑπεροφῆς.

IN TIMES OF TROUBLE. See on ix. 9 [10], note <sup>b</sup>.

2. THE AFFLICTED, or "humble." See on ix. 12.

IS HOTLY VEXED, lit. "burns." LXX, ἐμπυρίζεται ; Aq., ἐκκαίεται ; Symm., φλέγεται. Hengstenberg explains this of the indignation felt by the oppressed against their persecutors, which, however, is hardly probable. It is more natural to understand it of the suffering endured, whether mental or bodily. Through the proud dealing of the wicked their victims are placed in the fire or furnace of affliction. The verb is intransitive ; see vii. 13 [14].

The second clause of this verse is

capable of two interpretations : either (1) they (i.e. the humble) are taken in the devices which the wicked have imagined ; or (2) they (i.e. the wicked) are (or rather, *shall be*) taken in the devices which *they themselves* have imagined. In the former case we have the common change from the singular to the plural, "the afflicted" in the first clause meaning, of course, not an individual, but a class.

3-10. The conduct of the wicked described as *the reason* of the singer's complaint. Hence introduced by "for."

3. Both members of this verse have been differently explained. The first may be rendered either (1) boasteth of his heart's desire ; or (2) boasteth *after*, *according to*, etc. ; or (3) giveth praise to his heart's desire (instead of praising Jehovah). This last is the interpretation of both Ewald and Hengstenberg, who refer to Hab. i. 11-16 in support of it. But on this, and the rendering of the second member, see Critical Note.

4. All the older versions render, "the wicked in (or, according to) his pride (lit. height of his nostril) will not inquire," viz. after God — never troubles



4 The wicked, such is his scornfulness, (saith) "He requireth not."

"There is no God," is the sum of his devices.

5 His ways are sure<sup>e</sup> at all times :

Thy judgments are far above, out of his sight :

As for all his adversaries, he puffeth<sup>d</sup> at them.

6 He saith in his heart : "I cannot be moved :

From one generation to another I shall have<sup>e</sup> no misfortune."

7 Of cursing is his mouth full — of deceit and oppression.

Under his tongue is mischief and iniquity.

8 He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages,

In secret corners doth he slay the innocent ;

His eyes are privily set against the helpless.<sup>f</sup>

9 He lurketh in his hiding-place, as a lion in his lair ;

He lurketh to catch the afflicted ;

He doth catch the afflicted, drawing him in his net.

himself, that is, whether God approves his conduct or not. But the other interpretation, which makes the words "He (i.e. God) will not require" the words of the evil-doer, accords better with the clause following, and also with the similar expression, ver. 13, "He hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require."

THERE IS NO GOD : not that he is literally an atheist, but that the whole of his conduct, all his purposes and schemes, are carried on as if there were no God, — in a *practical* denial of his existence. See xiv. 1. Others render : "All his *thoughts* are, there is no God" ; but the noun properly means *schemes, devices*, rather than *thoughts*.

5. FAR ABOVE, accusative used adverbially, as xcii. 9 ; Isa. xxii. 16. The expression is just the opposite to xviii. 22 [23], "all his judgments are before me" ; whereas they are so far out of the sight of the wicked, that he acts as if they could never reach him. See Job xxii. 12, etc.

7. CURSING ; apparently, from what follows, "perjury" (though the word does not of itself mean this), reckless

false swearing in order to effect his evil purposes. See lix. 12 [13], and Hos. iv. 2, in both which passages the same words "swearing and lying" occur together, as here "swearing and deceit."

UNDER HIS TONGUE, — not to be explained by a reference to the poison-bag of serpents, because the same phrase occurs also in a good sense (lxvi. 17 ; Cant. iv. 11). Just in the same sense, "*upon the tongue*," (xv. 3 ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2).

8-10. The crafty schemes of the wicked in order to entrap their victims.

8. VILLAGES. The word is explained (Lev. xxv. 31) to mean a collection of houses not enclosed within a wall. But it is doubtful whether the villages are mentioned because, from their defenceless state, it was easier there to plunder and kill ; or whether by these villages are meant the haunts of the robbers themselves, the places *in which* they lurked, not *against which* they formed their designs ; nomad encampments of predatory Bedouins, who thence fell upon helpless travellers. This last seems more probable. Compare Gen. xxv. 16.

9. There is some confusion in the

- 10 So he is crushed,<sup>g</sup> sinks down and falls ;  
 The helpless<sup>f</sup> (perish) by means of his strength.<sup>h</sup>
- 11 He saith in his heart : “ God hath forgotten ;  
 He hath hidden his face ; he will never see it.”
- II. P 12 Arise, O Jehovah ! O God, lift up<sup>i</sup> thine hand !  
 Forget not the afflicted.
- 13 Wherefore should the wicked despise God ?  
 (Wherefore should he) say in his heart, “ Thou wilt  
 not require (it)” ?
- Y 14 Thou hast seen (it) ; for THOU considerest mischief  
 and vexation,  
 That (men) may put<sup>k</sup> (the matter) into thy hand.  
 The helpless<sup>f</sup> leaveth (it) to thee :  
 Thou hast been the helper of the orphan.
- W 15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evil man ;  
 When his wickedness is sought for, let it no more  
 be found.

metaphors employed. The wicked is compared first to the lion watching for his prey, and then to the hunter taking wild animals in his net. Whereas, again, in verse 10 we seem to have the image of the wild beast crushing his prey.

10. For the explanation of this verse see Critical Notes.

11. A repetition of the statement in verse 4, which at once puts in a more forcible light the character of these men, and lends greater earnestness to the prayer which follows. See for the same sentiment, Zeph. i. 12. In the last clause of the verse the verb is in the preterite : “ he *hath* not seen it forever,” which expanded = “ he hath not seen it — and he will not see it forever.”

12–18. Second principal division of the Psalm, in which the poet (1) cries earnestly to God for help and vengeance upon his enemies (12–15) ; and then (2) expresses his confidence that his prayer has been heard (16–18).

13. The argument is, that God’s honor is concerned in the reproach which is brought against it by the success of the wicked.

WHEREFORE SHOULD, etc.; lit. “wherefore hath the wicked despised God ? ”

14. THOU HAST SEEN (IT). An emphatic, energetic protest against the words immediately preceding, and also with a reference to the “ he will never see,” (ver. 11), throwing back the word in the mouth of the wicked. (Cf. xxxv. 22.) There is a time coming, he feels assured, when all this disorder will be set right. God is not the passive spectator of human affairs which these men deem him. He “ considers ” (i.e. regards with interest and sympathy) what is going on. See the same word, xxxiii. 13 ; lxxx. 15 ; Hab. i. 3, 13, and in many other passages. The helpless, therefore, may leave all to God, — and with the more confidence, because God *has been* the helper of those who, like the orphan, are deprived of human protectors. This appeal to past experience is always a ground of confidence. The road we are now travelling may be very dark ; but let us look back, and on some spot which we have passed we shall see the light shining.

15. According to the Masoretic vision, this verse should be read,

16 Jehovah is king for ever and ever :

The nations have perished out of his land.

17 The desire of the afflicted hast thou heard, O Jehovah ;

Thou establishest their heart ;

Thine ear hearkeneth (unto them),

18 That thou mayest judge (the cause of) the orphan and the oppressed,

So that mortal man of the earth<sup>1</sup> may no more terrify.

Break thou the arm of the wicked ;

And as for the evil man, when his wickedness, etc.

WHEN HIS WICKEDNESS, etc. Ordinarily such an expression might seem to denote a wish that his wickedness should be forgiven on repentance ; but that clearly is not the sense here. The meaning must be, "Let the wicked and his wickedness disappear, so that, even when sought for, it cannot be found." "To seek, and not find" is a proverbial expression, signifying that an object has utterly perished or disappeared, so as to leave no trace of its existence. See xxxvii. 36 ; Isa. xli. 12. Cf. John vii. 34, *Ζητήσατέ με, καὶ οὐχ εὕρήσετε*. But what is the subject of the verbs ? And are the verbs in the second or third person ? If in the *second*, then two renderings are possible : (1) "Thou (Jehovah) shalt seek" (i.e. require so as to punish — which is the meaning of the same verb in ver. 4, 13), or rather, imperative : "Seek, i.e. punish his wickedness," (and) find nothing (more to punish) ; punish his wickedness, till it be clean gone ; or (2) the second person is employed in a vague general sense, "thou (i.e. anybody) shalt seek, etc." so that the sentence is equivalent to the impersonal "it shall be sought for," etc. So the LXX, *ζητηθήσεται ἡ ἀμαρτία αὐτοῦ*,

*καὶ οὐ μὴ εὕρεθῇ*. Of these two explanations, the last is certainly preferable, as preserving the proverbial character of the phrase, which is quite lost sight of in the other. A third, however, is possible. The verb may be in the *third* person, the noun, "his wickedness," being the subject (personified). The rendering would then be, "And as for the evil man" (according to the Masoretic punctuation this belongs to the second member of the verse), "let his wickedness seek him, and no more find him." But this, though not otherwise than forcible, seems somewhat artificial.

16. The triumph of faith, which, knowing that Jehovah is King, already sees by anticipation his righteous judgment executed. The bold plunderers who have so long infested the land are already swept away, says the singer, so sure is he of the issue. The land, which is Jehovah's land, must "be purged of all evil-doers," as once of the Canaanites, who were driven out. Israel may be "mightily oppressed," as by Sisera of old ; but God will hear his cry, and give strength to his trembling heart (ver. 17), and so manifest his power that these tyrants who, with all their boasting, are but weak mortal men (ver. 18), shall no longer oppress his people.

<sup>a</sup> *הָלַל* with *עַל* apparently as in Ps. xliv. 9, with *בְּ*, "He maketh his boast of," etc. *הָאֵינָה* is, then, either abstract, "the desire itself," the boasting concerning which is the utmost height of wickedness (cf. Isa. iii. 9) ; or, "the satisfaction of the desire" ; or concrete, "the object of desire," as xxi. 3, lxxviii. 29, 30. The Syr. renders "he boasteth himself in,"

etc., LXX, *ἐπαύσινα*, and Jerome, *laudabitur in*, but in some mss. *laudabit desiderium*. But there is no other instance of this construction with  $\text{לִבִּי}$ . Hupfeld, therefore would render, "he boasts *according to* the desire," etc., i.e. he merely follows the promptings and suggestions of his heart, regardless of right or wrong. Cf. Isa. xxvi. 8. But this is not very satisfactory, and  $\text{לִבִּי}$  is never used absolutely like the Hithp. in the sense of boasting.

<sup>b</sup> Two questions have here to be decided. First, is  $\text{לִבִּי}$  the subject or the object of  $\text{לִבִּי}$ ; and next, what is the meaning of  $\text{לִבִּי}$ ? Some would render, "And the robber [or the covetous] curseth (and) despiseth Jehovah." But Schultens on Job, p. 12, has proved that the verb  $\text{לִבִּי}$  never has this meaning. At most it can only mean "to bid farewell to" (because at parting men blessed one another), and so "to renounce" — "and the robber renounceth and despiseth Jehovah." Hengstl., however, who also makes  $\text{לִבִּי}$  the *subject*, retains the usual meaning of  $\text{לִבִּי}$ , and renders "he blesses [and yet] despises Jehovah"; i.e. he blesses Jehovah for his ill-gotten gains, and yet all the while despises him. In support of this interpretation he refers to Gen. xl. 3, where the owners of the flock slay them and hold themselves not guilty, and they that sell them say, "Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich." On the whole, however, it seems better to retain the same subject as in the former member of the verse, viz.  $\text{לִבִּי}$ , and to make  $\text{לִבִּי}$  the object of the verb. We then get, "he blesseth the robber," parallel to "he boasteth of (or after) his heart's desire"; and the contrast, rendered more effective by the asyndeton, "He blesseth the robber — he despiseth Jehovah."

<sup>c</sup>  $\text{לִבִּי}$ , "are strong, sure, propitious." Cf. Job xx. 21, and the noun  $\text{לִבִּי}$ , "strength." The LXX, *ἀσθενήσαντες*, evidently by a mistake, connecting the word with the root  $\text{לִבִּי}$ ,  $\text{לִבִּי}$ , *propitius*. Similar the Syr.  $\text{ܠܒܝܢܐ}$ , *propitius sunt vires ejus* rendered by Dabbe *solutae sunt*; Jerome, *potuerunt*; others give, "are smoked." But all these rest on mistaken interpretations of the root.

<sup>d</sup>  $\text{לִבִּי}$ , "puffed," i.e. in scorn or contempt. See Mal. i. 13. So the Syr.,  $\text{ܠܒܝܢܐ}$ , and Jerome, *despicit*; Others, "bloweth upon them," i.e. he has only to blow, and they wither. Hengstl. compares Isa. xl. 24, and the expression in Plautus *Miles Glor.* i. 1. 17, "Cajus in legiones diffusisset spiritum quasi talia ventus." So Symm. *ἐκπνέει*. Either of these renderings is admissible; but the first is the simpler, and more in accordance with the context, where the *pride* of the wicked man is the leading idea.

<sup>e</sup>  $\text{לִבִּי}$ . The construction of this word has perplexed the interpreters. The Chald. has "from generation to generation I shall not be



moved from doing evil"; the Syr., "he meditates evil," following, however, perhaps a different text; the LXX omit the relative altogether, and have merely *ἀνευ κακοῦ*; Jerome, *sine malo*; Symm., οὐ γὰρ ἔσομαι ἐν κακώσει. The simplest way, perhaps, is to refer the relative to the words immediately preceding, דָּר דָּר, "through generations which are free from evil." Others make אָשֶׁר = בְּאָשֶׁר or עַל אָשֶׁר, "inasmuch as, or because I am (or, shall be) free from misfortune." Hengst. will have it emphatic, = "*I am one who shall not*," etc., which he attempts to defend by Isa. viii. 20; where, however, אָשֶׁר does not introduce the apodosis, as he asserts. According to Hitzig, אָשֶׁר depends upon אָמַר and introduces the direct discourse, as e.g. 2 Sam. i. 4, only that instead of standing at the beginning of the clause, it stands after other words, as in Zech. viii. 20, 23. "He hath said that from generation to generation," etc.

הֶלְכָּה. The word occurs only in this Psalm; here and ver. 14, and again in the plural הֶלְכָּאִים, ver. 10. The Masoretic punctuation evidently intends us to take הֶלְכָּה as = הֵלֵךְ, from הָלַךְ with the suffix; "thy host," or "thy company" (the form in verse 14 being pausal; where, in correct texts, we have a Segol הֶלְכָּה, not a Tsere); and הֶלְכָּאִים, ver. 10, as two words, הָלַךְ אִים, "the company of the afflicted, or terrified." But the punctuation is manifestly wrong. It is clear that we have the singular and plural forms of the same word. We must, therefore, assume an adjective הֶלְכָּה, formed after the analogy of הַפְּשִׁי, but with the termination הֶּ (originally the Aramaic חֶ) instead of הִי from a root הֵלַךְ, "weakness, helplessness," which, though it does not occur in Heb. is found in Arab. حَلَك, "to be black," and so "to be miserable." For the introduction of the א in the plural, may be compared פִּתְאִים from פָּתַי, and טִלְאִים from טָלַי or טָלָה.

The older versions generally support this. They all render it as one word, "the poor," "the weak," etc. So Chald., Syr., Arab., though the Chald. fluctuates somewhat, using in ver. 8 לְבָשְׁתִּינָא, and in ver. 10 עֲנִיָּא, whilst in ver. 14 it introduces the suffix עֲנִיָּךְ. The LXX use πένητες and πτωχοί; Aq. and Symm., ἀσθενεῖς.

רָכָה = רָכַה, according to the K'ri; which is then generally explained, "he crouches down the better to conceal himself; or, gathers himself together, as if the better to make his spring." But there is no proof that the verb רָכַה ever has this meaning. In Kal it does not occur elsewhere. In Piel it means "to crush, to grind to fine powder." But retaining the K'thibh with other points we may read רָכָה (so Gesen. and Hupfeld) as an adjective with intransitive or passive meaning (like רָכָה, ver. 18), "one who is crushed." Then we may

render either "and crushed, he (the humble) sinks down"; or "the crushed men, the oppressed, sink down." So Symm. ὁ δὲ θλασθεὶς καμψθήσεται. He may, however, have read הִרְבָּה (taking it intransitively), and have meant merely to express the two Hebrew verbs by the participle and verb in Greek. The LXX connect it with the foregoing verse, ἐν τῇ παγίδι αὐτοῦ ταπεινώσει αὐτόν; Jerome *Et confractum subjiciet*.

<sup>h</sup> הַצַּיִמִּים, rendered by many "his strong ones," and supposed to refer to the young of the lion, the metaphor already used being continued. Others again supply some noun, such as "claws" or "teeth." Ewald supposes the form to be dual, צַיִמִּים, and translates "claws." But הַצַּיִמִּים may be an abstract plural noun, meaning "strength." So the Chald. interprets it by הַקִּיָּה, and Jerome *viribus suis*.

<sup>i</sup> נָשָׂא, the fuller form, instead of שָׂא. Similarly, but then with incorrect orthography, נָסָה, iv. 7.

<sup>k</sup> לָחַהּ ב'. This is commonly explained by reference to Isa. xlix. 16, עַל כַּפַּיִם חָתַתְךָ, "I have graven thee upon the hands"; and the phrase is supposed to mean that God has so engraven all this evil-doing, as it were, on his hands, that he cannot forget it, and will therefore surely punish it. But the simple phrase נָתַן בִּיד cannot possibly mean "to engrave on the hand." It can only mean, either "to take into the hand," or "to put into the hand." The latter is the preferable rendering: "Thou considerest mischief and vexation, to put it (i.e. that men may put it, that it may be put) into thy hand." And this agrees with what follows: "the helpless leaveth it to thee." So LXX, τοῦ παραδοῦναι αὐτοὺς εἰς χεῖράς σου; Jerome, *Ut detur in manu tua*; and the Syr., Thou waitest for it to be delivered into thy hands." Calvin gives a similar turn to the passage, for he remarks: "Nostrum est patienter quiescere quamdiu in manu Dei reposita erit vindicta." But he explains לָחַהּ ב', "That thou mayest take (it) into thy hand": "*Ut ponas in manum, quod nihil aliud quam serio et cum effectu cognoscere.*"

<sup>l</sup> The second clause of verse 18 is capable of different interpretations, according as we join מִן הָאֲרָץ with the verb לַעֲרֹץ or with אֲנֹשׁ. In the former case the rendering would be "that they (the wicked, or men generally, the subject not being determined) may no more terrify men out of the land," i.e. that the heathen persecutors may not drive out the Israelites from Canaan. But אֲנֹשׁ is not used of the sufferers, but of their tyrants (ix. 20), and we should expect עֲנִיִּים, or some such word. In the latter case, אֲנֹשׁ מִן הָאֲרָץ, "frail man of the earth," would seem to be an expression designedly chosen to pour contempt on the haughty plunderers described above. Similarly xvii. 14, מְהָרִים מִמְּלָר, "men of

the world." Then the rendering will be, "That mortal man may no more terrify," or, taking ערץ not in the sense of "to terrify," but "to oppose, to resist," as in Isa. xlvii. 12, "That mortal men, etc., may no more resist (thee)." So the LXX μεγαλαυχῆν; and then this clause would be exactly parallel to the אֵל רָצוּ אֹנִי־שׁ, ix. 20. Perhaps, too, there is, as Calvin suggests, a tacit opposition between these men of the *earth* and the heaven where God dwells: "*E terra tacitam continet antithesin inter humile terrae domicilium et coelorum altitudinem. Unde enim ad oppugnandos Dei filios prodent? E terra scilicet, perinde ac si vermiculi e terrae fissuris emergerent. Atqui hoc modo Deum ipsum impetunt, qui e coelo auxilium servis suis promittit.*"

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## PSALM XI.

THE singer is in danger of his life; and timorous and faint-hearted counsellors would fain persuade him to seek safety in flight. But, full of unshaken faith in God, he rejects their counsel, believing that Jehovah, the righteous king, though he tries his servants, does not forsake them. Not the righteous, but the wicked have need to fear. The Psalm is so short and so general in its character, that it is not easy to say to what circumstances in David's life it should be referred. The choice seems, however, to lie between his persecution by Saul and the rebellion of his son Absalom. Delitzsch decides for the last, and thinks the counsel (ver. 1), "flee to your mountain," comes from the mouth of friends who were anxious to persuade the king to betake himself, as he had before done when hunted by Saul, to "the rocks of the wild goats" (1 Sam. xxiv. 3). It is in favor, to some extent, of this view that the expression in ver. 3, "when the foundations are destroyed," points to a time when lawful authority was subverted.

The Psalm consists of two strophes, which may be briefly characterized:

I. The timid counsels of the faint-hearted (ver. 1-3).

II. The answer of faith (ver. 4-7).

The first strophe, however, it should be observed, opens with the calm assertion of confident trust, before we hear a word of expostulation with those whose advice the Psalmist rejects.

[For the Precentor. (A Psalm) of David.]

1 IN Jehovah have I found refuge :

How say ye to my soul :

“Flee ye<sup>a</sup> to your mountain, (like) a bird ;

2 For lo ! the wicked bend the bow,

They have aimed their arrow upon the string,

To shoot in the dark at them that are upright in heart.

3 When<sup>b</sup> the foundations are destroyed,

What can the righteous do ? ”

1. IN JEHOVAH—under the shadow of his wings (xxxvi. 7 [8])—HAVE I FOUND REFUGE ; I need no other refuge : how *can* ye say to me, etc. ; my feet are on the true rock, why should I look elsewhere for safety ? This is the full force of the expression. There is moreover a force in the perfect, “*I have found.*” It is an exclamation of joyful confidence in the thought that he *has* such a refuge ; it is not yet to seek. The advice here given, and which he repels, is that of timid and desponding friends, who would persuade him that all is lost, and that the highest wisdom is to yield to circumstances, and to seek safety not in resistance, but in flight. But in fact the voice which thus speaks is the voice of the natural heart, of the selfish, and therefore short-sighted and cowardly, instinct, which always asks first, not What is right ? but, What is safe ? The advice may be well meant, but it is unworthy. (Cf. iii. 3 ; iv. 8 [7].) This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. But it is often a sorer trial for faith to have to withstand the pleadings of well-meaning friends than to arm itself against open enemies.

TO MY SOUL. Cf. iii. 2 [3]. “*Significans pectus suum fuisse confixum probrosa illa rejectione.*” — *Calvin.*

FLEE YE, plural, because, though the words are aimed chiefly at David, and addressed to him (“*to my soul*”), yet his friends and partisans, who are involved in the same peril, are also included.

(LIKE) A BIRD, or “*like birds,*” the sing. being here collective, for the plural, as often.

TO YOUR MOUNTAIN. This partly, perhaps, follows the image of the bird, “*which, when hunted on the plain, betakes itself to the woods and mountains*” (DeWette) ; but the mountains, caves, and fastnesses of Palestine would be the natural hiding-place of persons in danger. Cf. Jud. vi. 2 ; 1 Sam. xiii. 6 ; 1 Macc. ii. 28 ; Matt. xxiv. 16.) Hengst. sees an allusion to Gen. xix. 17, and Tholuck to the rocks in the wilderness of Judah to which David betook himself, 1 Sam. xxvi. 20 ; see also xxiii. 25–28 ; xxiv. 3.

2. Observe the change of tense : “*they are bending ; nay, they have already aimed.*” The image here used of the bird pursued by the hunters reminds us of what David says to Saul (1 Sam. xxvi. 20) : “*The king hath come to seek me, as when one hunteth a partridge in the mountains.*”

3. A further reason for the adoption of a timid policy. All is in hopeless disorder and confusion. THE FOUNDATIONS, or “*pillars,*” may either mean the principal *persons* (such as magistrates and others in authority, cf. Isa. xix. 10, and *σύλαιοι* of the apostles, Gal. ii. 9), or the very principles of law and order (see lxxxii. 5 ; Ezek. xxx.) which were now subverted.

4–7. The answer of faith, the glance directed from earth to heaven, the full



## 4 Jehovah (is) in his holy temple ;

Jehovah — his throne is in heaven :

His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

## 5 Jehovah trieth the righteous,

But the wicked and him that loveth violence doth his soul  
abhor.

## 6 May he rain upon the wicked snares,

Fire and brimstone, and a burning wind,<sup>c</sup> as the portion  
of their cup.

trust in the righteous and all-seeing Lord, the confidence that whatever the apparent confusion and disorder of the lower world, there is an eye that sees and a hand that directs all, that even the suffering of the righteous is part of a divine purpose of love.

4. This verse might also be rendered : Jehovah in his holy temple,  
Jehovah (whose) throne (is) in heaven, —  
His eyes behold, his eyelids try, etc.

In any case the emphasis rests upon the verbs in this last clause, which are the real predicates.

HOLY TEMPLE, used not only of the Temple or tabernacle in Jerusalem (see on v. 7), but also of the heavenly temple (xviii. 6 [7] ; xxix. 9 ; Isa. vi. ; Hab. ii. 20 ; Mic. i. 2). Here the parallelism would rather favor the latter.

5. TRIETH. The same verb as in the previous verse, but used here in a more definite sense, with reference to the result of the trial : puts them into the furnace (the word is used of the testing of metals), that they may come forth as pure gold. Cf. xvii. 3 ; Job xxiii. 10.

6. The figures in this verse are borrowed from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

MAY HE RAIN. We might rather have expected the future, "He will rain," as marking the certainty of the coming judgment. But the form is optative, and must therefore be so rendered. David, who has just said that Jehovah abhors the wicked, thus places himself, as it were, on the Lord's side.

SNARES. The word presents some

difficulty. It seems a harsh metaphor to speak of raining snares, especially in immediate juxtaposition with fire and brimstone. Still we must recollect that the Hebrew poets were not always careful to avoid incongruity of metaphor. We have immediately following a metaphor of an entirely different kind, "the portion of their cup." Ewald reads שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה, "coals of fire," and arranges the clauses as follow :

"On the wicked he raineth coals of fire  
and brimstone ;

A burning wind is the portion of  
their cup."

The first line gives, as he says, the image of a fiery rain from heaven, as in the overthrow from Sodom : the second, that of a poisonous Simoom, drunk in, as it were, from an envenomed cup ; others again take the word SNARES as in apposition with the following nouns : "fire and brimstone as snares or nets," or, "in flakes, masses" ; this last sense of the word being derived from its use in Num. xvi. 38, where it means "thin plates."

7. Thus faith kindles into hope. Not only does David make Jehovah his refuge in calamity, but he can rejoice in the thought that he shall behold the face of God, — behold now the light of his countenance even in the midst of gloom and darkness. (Cf. iv. 7 ; xxi. 7.) Did his hope reach beyond this, and are we to suppose that here he looks forward to seeing God in the resurrection ? We cannot tell. But see xvi. 11 ; xvii. 15. To us, however, his words may be the

7 For righteous is Jehovah, he loveth righteousness ;  
They that are upright shall behold his face.<sup>d</sup>

expression of a "hope full of immortality." "We know that our light affliction worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We know that "when he shall appear . . . we shall see him as he is."

<sup>a</sup> נִירִי. It is better to adopt the K'thibh in this case than the K'ri, נִירִי, because of the plural suffix which follows. The correction to the sing. was made to suit the preceding נִפְשֵׁי, but with the obvious disadvantage of clashing with the plur. suffix in הִרְכָּם. Nor can this be defended by Micah i. 11, שׁ, עֲבָרֵי לָכֶם יוֹשְׁ, because there the subject is *a city*, and the plural, therefore, naturally refers to the *inhabitants*. צְפוּרִי, either with the particle of comparison omitted, as in xxii. 14; xlviii. 8, and elsewhere, or simple vocative, "ye birds"; the persons themselves being so addressed (metaphor instead of comparison, as xii. 6 [7]). The accentuation of the three last words of the verse is very peculiar. Rebia gersh, Tiphcha finale (Tarcha) Silluk, instead of the usual accents after Athnach, viz. Tarcha, Munach, Silluk. But we find another instance of exactly the same kind in lxxiii. 9.

<sup>b</sup> The construction is unusual. כִּי, "when," in the protasis followed by a question in the apodosis with the verb in the *perfect*. The only other passage like it is Job xxxviii. 41, but there we have the *future* in the apodosis. We have, however, כִּי followed by מֶה in Ps. viii. 4, 5, but without any verb expressed in the interrogative clause. The *perfect* here with the interrogation is remarkable. Lit. "What hath the righteous done?" i.e. what good has he effected by all his efforts? Or perhaps, hypothetically, "Quid *fecerit*, s. *efficeret* contra tantam insolentiam."

<sup>c</sup> The word זֶלַעַפָּה occurs Lam. v. 10, of hunger, and cxix. 53 as synonymous with קִנְאָה. מִנְּהָ stat. construct. of מִנְּהָ, for מִנְּהָ, with Kametz, because = מִנְּהָ as קָצָה = תִּצְנֶה. The word occurs only as construct. See on xvi. note <sup>h</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> יֶשְׁרִי "the upright," singular, but in a collective sense, and therefore followed by a plural predicate (as ix. 7). The suffix יֶשְׁרִי may be *singular* as well as *plural*, especially when used, as here, in reference to God.

## PSALM XII.

THIS, according to the title, is one of David's Psalms; but there is nothing in the circumstances, so far as we know them, of his history, which can lead us to associate the Psalm with any particular period. Tholuck thinks it is aimed at persons by whom David was surrounded in the court of Saul. Others suppose that it was occasioned by the treachery of the Ziphites, 1 Sam. xvii. 23, or the treachery of Ahithophel in Absalom's rebellion. But it is not one or two prominent individuals whose conduct forms the burden of the Psalmist's complaint. He is evidently smarting from the falseness and hypocrisy of the time. The defection which he deplors is a national defection. Like Elijah in the deserts, he feels himself alone. "There is not one godly man left: the true-hearted are cut off." A taint has spread through society (to use the modern expression, for which the Hebrew poet says, "this generation"). Falsehood is everywhere, truth nowhere. The heart of men is double; their lips are flattering lips (ver. 3). And whilst they utter slander, hypocrisy, and lies, they boast of their power; and not only give their tongues license, but justify the license: "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

Now this utter hollowness and insincerity are very hard to bear. The few who, in the midst of the general corruption, still retain their integrity are persecuted, and sigh for deliverance. This deliverance is promised them in the form of a Divine interposition. The singer, filled with the spirit of prophecy, consoles himself, and those afflicted like himself, not in his own words, but in the words of God (ver. 6). And then remembering how pure those words are, how unalterably true—not like the words of men which *seem* so fair, but *are* so false—he feels that there he can rest, calm in the conviction that, though the wicked walk on every side, Jehovah will save them that love him from all their machinations (ver. 8).

Both the circumstances of the Psalmist and his prayer are very similar to what we find in the two immediately preceding Psalms. The belief here expressed as to the overthrow of the wicked (ver. 5-8 [6-9]) may be compared with xi. 5-7. In the latter passage that belief is based upon God's *character* as a righteous God. In this Psalm it rests apparently upon a special *promise*, but in fact upon God's *word*. But God's word teaches us what God's character is. The difference therefore is formal, not real.

The Psalm then consists of two principal divisions:

I. A complaint (ver. 1-4).

II. The answer to that complaint (ver. 5-7).

These two principal sections may be further subdivided as follow:

I. (1) The cry for help, because

(a) good men are nowhere to be found; and

(b) lies and flattery and insincerity prevail (ver. 1, 2).

(2) The prayer that flatterers and liars may be destroyed (ver. 3, 4).

II. (3) God's promise of help, in answer to the cry for help; and the Psalmist's amen (ver. 5, 6).

(4) The assurance and hope built upon the promise (ver. 7, 8).

[For the Precentor. Upon the Octave.<sup>a</sup> (A Psalm) of David.]

1 SAVE, Jehovah, for the good man ceaseth,<sup>b</sup>

For the faithful fail<sup>c</sup> from among the children of men.

2 They speak vanity, every one with his neighbor;

With flattering lips and a double heart do they speak.

3 May Jehovah cut off<sup>d</sup> all flattering<sup>e</sup> lips,

(And) the tongue that speaketh great things,

4 Which say: "With our tongue we are strong,<sup>f</sup>

Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?"

1. **SAVE.** More emphatic, because no object is expressed. Cf. cxvi. 1, where in like manner the verb "I love" stands without its object.

**THE GOOD . . . THE FAITHFUL.** The former (an adjective from the same root as the noun commonly rendered "loving-kindness") is either (1) one who is the object of God's loving-kindness, or (2) one who shows love to God or to man; it describes the good man both in his relation to God and in his relation to men. (See on iv. 3, note<sup>d</sup>, and on xvi. 10.) The latter are those who are honest and true-hearted; lit. who are steadfast, unchanged by the evil influences around them; men that may be relied on (יָצִיב, *to be firm, stable*). Luther glosses: "Amens-Leute," *Amenfolk*, i.e. those whose heart towards God and their neighbors is true and earnest, like the *amen* of a prayer.

2. **THEY SPEAK VANITY,** i.e. emptiness, untruth (as xli. 7; cxliv. 8, 11).

**EVERY ONE WITH HIS NEIGHBOR.** See the exact opposite of this enjoined (Eph. iv. 25), and the duty grounded on the fact that we are members one of another. But the word "neighbor" must not be pressed. "Neighbor" and "brother" are used in Hebrew without thinking of the exact relation implied in the words, where we should simply say "another."

**WITH A DOUBLE HEART,** lit. "with a heart and a heart"; sc. *altero quem proferunt, altero quem recondunt*. We have the opposite expression (1 Chron. xii. 33); and in verse 38 the parallel expressions to this last, "a perfect heart," "one heart."

3. The burning of a righteous indignation uttering itself in a fervent prayer for the uprooting of the whole kingdom



- 5 "For the desolation of the afflicted,  
 For the deep sighing of the poor,  
 Now will I arise," saith Jehovah,  
 "I will set him in the safety for which he longeth."<sup>s</sup>
- 6 The words of Jehovah are pure<sup>h</sup> words,  
 (Like) silver fined in a furnace<sup>i</sup> in the earth, purified  
 seven times.
- 7 Thou, O Jehovah, wilt keep them,  
 Thou wilt preserve us from this generation forever.

of lies. "Querelae imprecationem annectit." — Calvin.

3, 4. At first thought there seems to be a contradiction in speaking of *flattering* lips, and a tongue that speaketh *great*, i.e. proud words. But only at first thought. The men here described are evidently men occupying a high position, smooth and supple courtiers, perfect in the art of dissembling, yet glorying too in their power of saying what they list, however atrocious the falsehood or the calumny. So Calvin, "*Aulicos calumniatores perstringit, qui non modo suaviter se insinuant, sed grandiloqua mentendi libidine obruunt miseros homines.*"

5. A remarkable instance of the close affinity between the poet and the prophet among the Hebrews. Each, though in different ways, was the teacher of that eternal truth which he received from God. And this, by the way, suggests to us what every true poet should be. Broadly speaking, the difference lay here, that the poet gave utterance to the longings, aspirations, fears, doubts, anxieties of *man's* heart; whereas the prophet was commissioned to address himself directly to the people, as conveying to them the message of *God*. The one represented, so to speak, the human side of the truth — what man feels and is; the other the divine — what God is and requires. The one speaks for man to God; the other for God to man. Here, however, David, instead of expressing his own feeling of confidence that God will answer him, seems, as it were, to hear God himself speaking ("*Deum ipsum inducit loquentem,*" Calvin). See the

prophetic counterpart of this, Isa. xxxiii. 10.

NOW WILL I ARISE; emphatic, as if after long silence and much forbearance, now at length, etc.

6. The poet dwells on the purity and perfect truth of God's promises, not only as opposed to all lying lips of men (though that, I believe, was in his mind), but also that he may thus more deeply print upon the heart of the afflicted the certain fulfilment of the promise. This emphatic assertion was rendered necessary by the wide-spread and apparently long-prevailing corruption. For those who were weak in faith might begin to doubt whether the truth of God itself had not failed.

7. The faith and hope which rests upon the fact just before stated, that the words of Jehovah are pure words.

THEM, i.e. "the afflicted and poor," in ver. 5, and then immediately *us*, placing himself in the number; with the usual opposition between the two classes, the church and the world.

THIS GENERATION, spoken of those who not only live in the same age, but are pervaded by the spirit of that age. So Isa. liii. 8. Here, the world as opposed to the church.

8. This verse is no doubt perplexing, as it seems to contradict the confidence expressed in verse 7. Hupfeld, therefore, would either (1) interpret: — (Though) the wicked walk about on every side, (It is only) as when a rabble lifts itself up, etc. i.e. their pride and insolence will be but

8 The wicked walk to and fro on every side,  
When a rabble<sup>k</sup> lifts itself up over the children of men.

for a short time; it will come to an end very soon, like the outbreak of a mob. Or (2) he would transpose verses 7 and 8 so as to make the confident assurance of preservation close the Psalm. Delitzsch, on the other hand, thinks that the heart having lifted itself up to the hope of the future, sinks again at the sight of the gloomy present. He calls the Psalm a ring, of which the oracle, ver. 5, is the precious stone. But this return to gloom and doubt is, I believe, without parallel at the conclusion of a Psalm

<sup>a</sup> On the octave. See above, vi. 1.

<sup>b</sup> נמר, intransitive, as vii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> פסס, ἀπ. λεγ. The root, as Rashi observes, = אפס, "to come to an end." He compares אפס רמיי, 1 Sam. xvii. 1, = פס רמיי, 1 Chron. xi. 13. אמונים, not the plur. abstr. from אמין (as the LXX render ἀληθείαι; Symm., πίστις, etc.) but as the parallel חסיד shows, an adjective, "the true, the faithful." This is certain from the recurrence of the same parallelism, xxxi. 24 (See also 2 Sam. xx. 19, where the word occurs likewise as an adj.), as well as from the analogy of Micah vii. 2.

<sup>d</sup> יִכְרֶת, apoc. fut. in its proper opt. sense.

<sup>e</sup> חֲלָקוֹת, a plur. abstr. from חָלַקָה (not from חָלַק, as Rosenm.). This may be accus. of the instrument, according to Gesen. § 135, Rem. 3, or the ב instrumenti may be supplied from the next clause.

<sup>f</sup> לִלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ, either (1) "over our tongue have we power," we can do with it as we like, so Hupfeld; or (2) "as to our tongue (ל of reference) are we strong," the Hiph. in either case being = Kal. Our lips are our own, lit. "with us," sc. as allies (אֵת, as 2 Kings ix. 32). Cf. xxxviii. 10 [11], "The light of mine eyes is not with me," אֵין אִתִּי, i.e. it is gone — I can no longer make use of it.

<sup>g</sup> יִפְתֹּחַ לוֹ, either (1) "for which (sc. יִשָּׁע) he panteth;" or (2) "that he may recover breath," לוֹ being used in a reflective sense. פוּחַ, to breathe hard, to pant (so Hab. ii. 3, "it panteth for the end," i.e. longeth for its accomplishment).

<sup>h</sup> טְהָרוֹת, cf. Ps. xix. 9, 10. The image here expanded is hinted at elsewhere in the use of the word צְרוּרָה as applied to God's word, xviii. 31; cxix. 140; Prov. xxx. 5.

<sup>i</sup> עֲלִיל (prop. officina, r. עָלַל, operari), "furnace" for smelting of metals. It is difficult to say how לְאַרְץ should be construed. Commonly, as describing the material of עֲלִיל, "in a furnace of earth." But אֶרֶץ is

never used in this sense. Better therefore, "*belonging to* (i.e. fixed upon) the earth." Comp. in Schiller's *Glocke*:

"Fest gemauert in der Erden  
Steht die Form aus Lehm gebrannt."

זָכִיתָ<sup>k</sup> (ר. זָלַל, conn. with דָּלַל, תָּלַל, etc. to be *weak, languid, slack, worthless*) = Arab. *جُذُ vilitas*, that which is contemptible, and so vile, morally as well as socially. Abstr. for concr. Symm., οἱ εὐτελεῖς; Aq., ἐὼνισμένοι; Jerome, *vilissimi*.

## PSALM XIII.

IN this Psalm we see a servant of God long and sorely tried by the persecutions of unrelenting enemies, and, as it seems to himself, forgotten and forsaken of God, pouring out the agony of his soul in prayer. It is a long and weary struggle; it is a daily and hourly martyrdom; and, wrestling with his despair, he can but cry (like the souls under the altar, Rev. vi. 10), How long? And then calmer words of prayer rise to his lips (ver. 3, 4). And at last faith asserts her perfect victory (ver. 5). The rapid transition of feeling, from a depth of misery bordering on despair, to hope, and even joy, is very remarkable.

We have three strophes:

I. The first is "the deep sighing" of a heart overwhelmed with the agony of its despair (ver. 1, 2).

II. The calmer supplication succeeds, as if the very utterance of its grief had made the burden less (ver. 3, 4).

III. Prayer kindles into hope, lighted up with something even of joy (ver. 5).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

1 How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou forget me forever?

How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

1. It is quite unnecessary to point thus: "How long wilt thou forget me forever"? as if there were two distinct questions. (See the same double question, lxxix. 5; lxxxix. 46 [47]). It is natural to a perturbed and doubting heart thus to express itself, in a confused and almost contradictory manner. In its despair it thinks "God hath forgotten me"; and yet out of the very midst of its despair there rises up the conviction, — "No, not forever"; and then its hopelessness is changed to expostulation, "How long wilt thou forget me"? We may, if we choose it, paraphrase, "How long wilt thou *make as if* thou wouldst

2 How long must I take counsel in my soul,

(Having) sorrow in my heart daily? <sup>a</sup>

How long shall mine enemy lift up himself against me?

3 Consider, — answer me, O Jehovah my God,

Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the (sleep of) death.

forget me forever"? God's anger, the hiding of his countenance, as Delitzsch observes, cannot but seem eternal to the soul which is conscious of it. Nevertheless faith still cleaves to the love which hides itself under the disguise of severity, and exclaims, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "When we have long been crushed by sufferings, and no sign appears that God will succor us, the thought will force itself upon us, God hath forgotten me. For by nature we do not acknowledge that God cares for us in our afflictions; but by faith we lay hold of his invisible providence. So David, so far as he could judge from the actual state in which he was, seemed to himself forsaken of God. But at the same time, because the light of faith was his guide, he, with the eyes of his mind, looked through and beyond all else to the grace of God, far as it might seem hidden from his sight."—*Calvin*. And Luther: "Does he not portray in fitting words that most bitter anguish of spirit, which feels that it has to do with a God alienated, hostile, implacable, inexorable, whose wrath is (like himself) eternal? This is a state in which *Hope despairs, and yet Despair hopes* at the same time; and all that lives is 'the groaning that cannot be uttered,' wherewith the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for us, brooding over the waters shrouded in darkness, to use the expression in Gen. i. This no one understands who has not tasted it."

2. The "how long" four times repeated; for the long duration of the conflict is here the sting of the poet's grief.

HOW LONG MUST I TAKE COUNSEL? Lit. "put counsels or deliberations in my soul." See a similar use of the verb, Prov. xxvi. 24. This strikingly describes the helpless embarrassment of the suf-

ferer. Plan after plan suggests itself, is resolved upon, and then abandoned in despondency as utterly unavailing. As Luther says: "His heart is like a raging sea, in which all sorts of counsels move up and down; he tries on all hands to find a hole through which he can make his escape; he thinks on various plans, and still is utterly at a loss what to advise." Well must David have understood what this was, when, hunted by Saul, he knew not where to betake himself; at one time seeking refuge among the Moabites, at another in the wilderness of Ziph; now an outlaw hiding himself in the cave of Adullam, and anon a captain in the service of the king of the Philistines; and amid all his projects, haunted by the mournful conviction, "I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul." "Quamquam autem Dominus Spiritum consilii fidelibus se daturum promittit, non tamen semper ipsum in primo articulo suppeditat, sed quasi per flexuosas ambages ad tempus discurrere patitur, vel perplexos inter spinas haerere."—*Calvin*.

SORROW IN MY HEART. Not only parallel to, but flowing from, "counsels in my soul"; the burden of a heart saddened by its own thoughtfulness.

3. The lamentation now passes into prayer; and to the fourfold complaint of the first strophe answers the fourfold petition of the second, though the several members of the one do not exactly correspond to the several members of the other.

CONSIDER; "look upon me," opposed to the hiding of the face, 1 *b*. ANSWER ME, opposed to the forgetting, 1 *a*. First, look; then, hear and succor. "Thus," says Calvin, "does the Holy Ghost purposely accommodate the forms of prayer to our feelings." First, we must have



4 Lest mine enemy say : " I have prevailed against him " ;<sup>b</sup>

(Lest) mine adversaries exult because I am moved.

5 But as for me — in thy loving-kindness have I trusted ;

Let my heart exult in thy salvation :

Let me sing<sup>c</sup> to Jehovah, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.<sup>d</sup>

the conviction that God sees us, and then we can cry to him ; first the assurance that he *is*, and then that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

LIGHTEN MINE EYES, said not of spiritual but of physical support, as is clear from what follows, " lest I sleep the sleep of death " ; and also from the other passages where the same idiom occurs, 1 Sam. xiv. 27 and 29 (where the eyes of Jonathan are said to be enlightened, when, after being reduced to the extremity of faintness, he partakes of food), and Prov. xxix. 13. " *Instaura lucem vitæ oculis obtenebrescentibus.*" — *Rud.*

Such is the fearfulness of the spiritual conflict, that it seems as if death only could be the end. He knew this who said : " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

4. LEST MINE ENEMY SAY. Another reason why his prayer should be answered ; not because he is an enemy, but because God's honor and God's cause upon earth are in peril. (Cf. v. 9.)

5. Supplication passes into the ex-

pression of a joyful confidence. Faith, strengthened by prayer, rises above the present with its sorrows, and sees what is not as though it were ; and hopes yet to praise God with a song because of his goodness.

IN THY LOVING-KINDNESS, not in personal merit, nor in the justice of my cause.

" I have trusted — let me rejoice — let me sing — because of the experience I shall have that Jehovah *has dealt* bountifully with me."

" Whilst the thunder and the lightning are still raging around him, David sings his songs of praise, as Luther also says : ' While Satan rages and roars about him, he meanwhile sings quietly his little Psalm.' " — *Tholuck.*

With the two Iambics, *gamal âlâi*, the Psalm ends, the very rhythm of the words conspiring as it were with the sense of peace in the singer's breast, and the waves of song, stirred so tumultuously at the beginning, sinking down into the breathless calm of an unruffled sea.

<sup>a</sup> יוֹמָם, elsewhere, " in the day," as opposed to לַיְלָה. And so the LXX, Aq., Th., ἡμέρας. Here, however, apparently = כְּלַיִם, as Symm., κατ' ἡμέραν. Similarly Ezek. xxx. 16, צָרֵי יוֹמָם, " daily adversaries," i.e. who continually assail.

<sup>b</sup> רָכַבְתִּי לוֹ = רָכַבְתִּי. Cf. cxxix. 2 ; Gen. xxxii. 26.

<sup>c</sup> אֲשִׁירָה, " I fain would sing," 1 p. cohort. answering to יִגַּל, 3 p. jussive. אֲנִי, emphatic, as opposed to the enemies mentioned above. (Cf. iii. 6).

<sup>d</sup> גָּמַל עָלַי, cf. cxvi. 7 ; cxix. 17, where the phrase occurs in the same sense.

## PSALM XIV.

THE feeling expressed in this Psalm is in some measure the same which, as we have already seen, must have given occasion to the twelfth Psalm. The singer, keenly alive to the evils of his time, sees everything in the blackest colors. The apostasy is so wide-spread that all are involved in it, except the small remnant (implied in verse 4); and the world seems again ripe for judgment as in the days of Noah (ver. 2).

Both in this Psalm and in Psalm xii. the complaint is made that the wicked oppress and devour the righteous. In both, corruption has risen to its most gigantic height; but here the *doings* of bad men, there their *words*, form the chief subject of complaint.

In form the ode is dramatic, or quasi-dramatic. A great tragedy is enacting before the eyes of the poet. Sin is lifting itself up in Titanic madness against God, and God looks down upon its doings as once upon the builders of Babel. He sees utter apostasy (ver. 3); he speaks from heaven (ver. 4), and the evil-doers are confounded at the word of his mouth (ver. 5). "It would scarcely be possible," says Ewald, "for a great truth to be sketched in fewer or more striking outlines."

There is nothing in the Psalm which can lead us to fix its date or authorship precisely. The feeling is common enough at all times in men of earnest mind. Filled with a holy jealousy for God, no age seems to them so corrupt as their own, because they are engaged in perpetual and, as they are apt to think, hopeless encounter with its evils. Indeed, despair would be the result, did not the promise of the future lift them above the present (ver. 7).

Ver. 7 is not so decisive of a later date as has sometimes been supposed. For first, this might be a sort of liturgical doxology added to the original Psalm during the Exile; and next, it is not even certain that the reference is to the hope of return from the Babylonish captivity (see note on this verse).

This Psalm (Jehovistic) appears again with some variations, especially in ver. 5, 6, as Psalm liii. (Elohistic). It is not certain which of the two may claim the merit of being the original poem. Its place in the collection may incline us to give this the preference. And the change in the fifty-third might very well have been introduced to adapt it to the peculiar circumstances of the time.

The Psalm cannot be broken up into strophes; but the first verse answers to the third, and the second to the fourth.

In ver. 1, if we take the first member (*a*) as introductory, then the two remaining, (*b*) and (*c*), correspond to the two, (*a*) and (*b*), of ver. 3.

On the other hand, the idea in (*b*) of ver. 2 is expanded into two members (*a*) and (*b*) in ver. 4, whilst (*c*) in ver. 2 corresponds to (*c*) in ver. 4.

[For the Precentor. (A Psalm) of David.]

1 The fool <sup>a</sup> hath said in his heart, There is no God.

Corrupt, abominable are they in their doing ; <sup>b</sup>

There is none that doeth good.

2 Jehovah hath looked down from heaven upon the children of men,

To see if there be any that hath understanding,

That seeketh after God.<sup>c</sup>

3 They are all turned away, together they have become corrupt :

There is none that doeth good ; no, not one.

1. THE FOOL. Thus the Bible ever speaks of those who have cast off the fear of God. They are those whose understanding is darkened ; who, professing themselves to be wise, become fools. Such men, who make a boast of their reason, and would fain walk by the light of their reason, prove how little their reason is worth. The epithet is the more cutting, because persons of this kind generally lay claim to more than ordinary discernment.

IN HIS HEART. Rather a practical than a theoretical atheism ; not so much a denial of the *being* of a God, as a denial of his *moral government* of the world (cf. x. 5) ; and this evinced in their actions, rather than in their words. Their lives show what the thought of their hearts is (as indeed immediately follows). "The fool" is not the philosophic atheist with his arguments ("subducta ratione vel formati syllogismi"—*Calvin*) ; but the man who, by the *practice of wickedness* so stifles and corrupts within him the knowledge of God that he *virtually* acknowledges no God.

South, in his sermon on this verse (vol. iv. p. 19, Tegg's ed.), lays a stress on these words, as implying that the atheist dare not avow his atheism, but only cherishes it within. But the occurrence of the phrase elsewhere, e.g. x. 6, 10, 13, does not justify this stress.

2, 3. God appears as Witness and Judge of what is done upon earth.

2. LOOKED DOWN. The word used strictly of looking out of a window, 2 Kings ix. 30 ; and again of God looking upon the earth, cii. 20. As "they have corrupted," reminds us of the Flood ("all flesh had corrupted his way on the earth," Gen. vi. 12), so this "looking down" of the Tower of Babel, Gen. xi. 5. (Cf. xviii. 21.)

3. NO, NOT ONE. "See," says Luther, "how many words he uses that he may comprehend all, excluding none. First he says *all*, then *together*, and then *no, not one*." This and the two previous verses are quoted freely by St. Paul (he does not adhere even to the LXX) in Rom. iii. 10, etc., in proof of his position, that Jews as well as Gentiles are under sin.

- 4 "Have they no knowledge, all the workers of iniquity,  
 Who eat my people, (as) they eat bread,  
 (And) call not on Jehovah?"
- 5 There were they in great fear;  
 For God is in the generation of the righteous.
- 6 Though ye shame the counsel of the afflicted,  
 Yet Jehovah is his refuge.

As his argument is at this point addressed particularly to the Jew, he reasons, not from the sense of sin or the voice of conscience, but from the Scriptures, whose authority the Jew acknowledged. The Jew would, of course, admit the inference as to the state of the Gentile world.

The rest of the quotations which follow the above in the Epistle to the Romans are brought together by the apostle from different parts of the Old Testament. But in some mss. of the LXX, in the Vulg., and both Arab., Syro-Arab., and Copto-Arab., and, strangest of all, in the Syro-Hex., they are found in the Psalm, having evidently been transferred hither from the Epistle. So, also, in our Prayer-Book version, which, it should be remembered, is, in fact, Coverdale's (1535), and was made, not from the original, but from the Latin and German.

4. God himself is introduced as speaking.

NO KNOWLEDGE, used absolutely, as in Isa. i. 3. "Israel doth not know," is stupid like the brutes.

WHO EAT, lit. "who eating my people, eat bread"; who, so far from being conscious of their guilt, devour the righteous with the same unconsciousness with which they would take their accustomed meal. See the figure still further carried out, Micah iii. 1-3. Cf. also, for similar expressions, Jer. x. 21; Hos. vii. 7, in both of which passages the evil-doers are described (as here) as men who do not pray, "they call not upon Jehovah"; therefore are they so brutish. But see further on liii. 4.

MY PEOPLE. So, then, even in the worst times there is a remnant, the salt

of the earth, "the righteous generation," as they are afterwards called.

5. THERE WERE THEY, etc., lit. "There did they fear a fear." THERE; when God thus speaks to them in the terribleness of divine judgment. Calvin well explains: "Exprimitur poenae quam daturi sint certitudo, ac si eam digito monstraret."

BY GENERATION we are not to understand merely contemporaries. Here, as often elsewhere, a moral meaning attaches to the word, and it denotes those who are of *the same spirit*, whether that be the spirit of the world (xii. 8) or the spirit which is of God (xxiv. 6; lxxiii. 15). In like manner γενέα is used in the New Test. to denote "the race, with all its moral characteristics"; not "the people now alive."

6. THOUGH YE SHAME, or, "ye may put to shame" (yet ye shall not succeed), for God, etc. The A. V. is clearly wrong in rendering, "Ye have shamed," as if the verb were in the past tense.

THE COUNSEL OF THE AFFLICTED, i.e. all that is done by those who bear the reproach of Christ to advance God's glory upon earth. The children of the world cannot bring all this to naught, for in fighting against the righteous they fight against God, who is in the midst of them.

7. This last verse looks certainly very much like a later liturgical addition (as vers. 18, 19 [20, 21] of Psalm li.) The exiles in Babylon hoped yet for deliverance from Zion. Jehovah, they believed, had not forsaken his holy mountain, though he had suffered them to be scattered among the heathen. Daniel, we know, in prayer turned himself towards



7 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion !

When Jehovah bringeth back the captivity<sup>d</sup> of his people,  
Then may Jacob exult, then may Israel be glad.

Jerusalem (Dan. vi. 11). And it would be natural enough for a poet of that time to give utterance to the wish contained in this verse. It cannot, however, be denied, that the phrase, "to bring back the captivity," is used in other passages, metaphorically, of any deliverance from misery and restoration to prosperity. So of Job (xlii. 10), and so also Ezek. xvi. 53. It is better to adopt one of these explanations than to throw the whole Psalm as late as the Exile.

<sup>a</sup> The Hebrew is rich in epithets to describe different degrees of this infatuation. (1) פָּתִי, *the simple*, one whose folly consists in being easily led; lit. one who is *open* (ר. פתח) to the influence of others. (2) בְּסִיל, which denotes a grosser and almost brutish stupidity; such "hate knowledge," Prov. i. 22 (ר. כסל, "to be fat," and then "sluggish.") (3) נָבֵל, *the fool*, as one who is *flat, insipid* (ר. נבל, "to wither,") without taste or discernment. (Cf. in the opposite sense טַעַם, which means properly "taste," and then "understanding"; just as in the Latin *sapere*, the transition is made from the bodily to the mental perception). (4) אָוִיל and הוֹיֵל, by which are denoted more outrageous forms of folly, amounting to madness. See on the latter word, v. 5, note <sup>e</sup>. For a fuller description of the נָבֵל, see Isa. xxxii. 6.

<sup>b</sup> עָלִיתָ, the suffix omitted, as often in poetry, but not a loosely appended accus. The Hiphil verbs, though frequently used absolutely, are here followed by the direct object; cf. Zeph. iii. 7; Gen. vi. 12. Lit. "they have made corrupt, they have made abominable (their) doing."

<sup>c</sup> אֵת. There is no departure here from the usual rule as to the use of אֵת, the Divine Name being of course considered as a proper name.

<sup>d</sup> שׁוּב שְׁבוּת. The Kal form seems to be used in this phrase in preference to the Hiph., for the sake of the alliteration. שׁוּב has occasionally elsewhere in Kal a transitive signification; cf. lxxxv. 2, 5; Nah. ii. 3. See also Ezek. xlvii. 7, בְּשׁוּבֵי, where, if the verb had been intrans., we should have had בְּשׁוּבֵי, and, besides, the Hiph. יִשְׁבֵּי immediately precedes, which shows that here, at least, שׁוּב = חֲשִׁיב.

## PSALM XV.

THIS Psalm is commonly supposed to have been written on the occasion of the removal of the ark to Zion, and the consecration of the tabernacle there, 2 Sam. vi. 12-19. (Cf. 1 Chron. xv. 16). The subject of the Psalm, and the occurrence of a similar question and answer in xxiv., which was certainly composed for that occasion, might indeed dispose us to adopt this view.

On the other hand, the name "holy mountain" (ver. 1), as applied to Zion, would rather suggest a later date. It was the removal of the ark thither which made the mountain holy.

The form of the Psalm is very simple. Properly speaking it has no strophes or divisions. It is a question (ver. 1), and an answer to the question (ver. 2-5). It teaches simply what is the condition of man's approach to God with acceptance. There is implied in it, no doubt, that all merely outward service is vain; but the Psalm can scarcely be said to be specially directed (like Psalm l.) against lip-service and hypocritical worship. It describes rather the perfect character, the man who can draw near to God and live in his presence. Eleven particulars are enumerated in which this character is summed up. Hence in the Gemara (*Makkoth*, f. 24 a), it is said that David comprised the six hundred and thirteen commands of the law given on Sinai in eleven; Isaiah (it is added) in six (xxxiii. 15); Micah in three (vi. 8); Amos (v. 4), or rather Habakkuk (ii. 4), in one.

[A (Psalm) of David.]

1 JEHOVAH, who may sojourn in thy tabernacle?

Who may dwell on thy holy mountain?

1. That this Psalm is no mirror for the self-righteous to see themselves in, is evident from its first word, JEHOVAH. It is in the presence of God and in the light of God that the singer draws his portrait of the godly man. In his sight neither the hypocrite nor the formalist can stand. And on this account, and not as a mere matter of form, does David direct his question to God. The answer is not to be considered as if coming from the heavenly oracle; but the poet himself gives it, speaking by the light of the

Spirit of God, as cast upon his own heart, upon the word of God, and upon the world about him. So the Anglo-Saxon version paraphrases: "Then the Lord answered the prophet through inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the prophet said: I know, yet I ask, who dwells there?" etc.

TABERNACLE . . . HOLY MOUNTAIN. These words must not be explained away as mere figures of speech. TABERNACLE does not mean merely "dwelling," as when it is said, "The tabernacle of God

- 2 He that walketh perfectly,<sup>a</sup> and worketh righteousness,  
And speaketh truth in his heart ;
- 3 (That) hath not slandered with his tongue,  
Hath done no evil to his friend,  
Nor taken up a reproach against his neighbor ;
- 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned,<sup>b</sup>  
But he honoreth them that fear Jehovah ;  
(Who) sweareth to (his own) hurt,<sup>c</sup> and changeth not ;

shall be with men," nor can we with Venema interpret the HOLY MOUNTAIN as merely equivalent to a safe and indestructible abode. It always means Zion, and nothing else. But the Psalmist asks, Who is worthy to dwell, like Eli and Samuel of old, in the sacred courts? Who is fitted for that close and constant communion with God which such a dwelling implies? For God's presence and his revelation of himself were, under the Old Testament, connected with a certain *place*. And hence the love and ardent desire so constantly expressed for the place itself. (Cf. xxiii. 6; xxvi. 8; xxvii. 4, 5; lxxxiv. 1 [2], 5 [6], etc.) Of the two verbs, "sojourn" and "abide," the first denotes an occasional, the next a permanent, dwelling in a place. The first might be used of pilgrims coming up to Jerusalem, or of a guest lodging for a time at an inn, or in his friend's tent. But here they are apparently synonymous.

2, 3. The man with whom God will hold communion is now described, first as to what he is (ver. 2), and then as to what he is not (ver. 3).

(a) He *is* a man (1) of whole heart and life; (2) who does the will of God; and (3) speaks the truth because he loves it; it dwells in his heart, and he speaks it there first, before he speaks it with his tongue. "It is a beautiful order," says Luther. "First the person must be acceptable by cleanness (alluding to the Vulg. translation, *qui ingreditur sine macula*); then the work by righteousness; then the word by truth. So God has regard to Abel (himself) first, and then to his gifts." "Pulcher ordo,

primo persona grata requiritur per munditiam, deinde opus per justitiam, tandem verbum per veritatem. Sic respicit Deus ad Abel primum deinde et ad munera ejus." — *Oper. in Psalm. ii.* 326.

(b) He *is not* one who injures others either (1) by word, or (2) by deed, or (3) by listening to and propagating slander. This is, I think, the meaning of this last clause. It may be rendered either, "hath not received (i.e. from others) a reproach," etc. (That the verb will bear this meaning is certain. See Gesen. Thesaur. v. נִשָּׂא.) Or, "hath not taken up," i.e. has not stooped, so to speak, to pick up dirt out of the dunghill, that he may cast it at his neighbor; or, "hath not lifted up," i.e. so as to place it like a burden upon his neighbor.

4, 5. Again, his character is further described by affirmations and negations.

(a) He *is* one who turns away from the evil and honors the good, who regards as inviolable the sanctity of an oath (not a casuist who sets himself to find a pretext for breaking his word, when it is inconvenient to keep it).

(b) He *is not* one who loves usury or takes bribes. The taking of usury is strictly forbidden in the law (Ex. xxii. 25 [24]; Lev. xxv. 36, etc.), and denounced by the prophets (Isa. xxxiii. 15, "gain of oppressions"; Ezek. xviii. 8, 13; xxii. 12, etc.). Kimchi's casuistic distinction, that it is lawful for the Jew to take usury of strangers, but not of his own people, is very significant; and, like too many Christian, as well as Jewish, interpretations of Scripture,

5 Who hath not put out his money to usury,  
 Nor taken a reward against the innocent ; —  
 He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

framed to support a convenient and profitable practice.

Thus, in heart, in tongue, in actions, in his conduct, as a member of society, he is alike free from reproach.

Such is the figure of stainless honor drawn by the pen of a Jewish poet. Christian chivalry has not dreamed of a brighter. We have need often and seriously to ponder it. For it shows us that faith in God and spotless integrity may not be sundered ; that religion does not veil or excuse petty dishonesties ; that love to God is only then worthy the name when it is the life and bond of every social virtue. Each line is, as it were, a touchstone to which we should bring ourselves. To speak truth in the heart — to take up no reproach against a neighbor — would not the Christian man be perfect (τέλειος) of whom this could

be said? And that other trait in this divine character, — “who honoreth them that fear the Lord,” — is there a surer test of our spiritual condition than this, that we love and honor men *because they love Christ*?

5. Instead of “he that doeth these things shall dwell in the house of Jehovah,” etc., the answer is varied in form, “shall never be moved,” which is, in fact, the same truth in another and larger form. Such a man may not take up his dwelling in the earthly courts of the Lord ; but, at least, he shall so live in the presence of God, and under the care of God, that his feet shall be upon a rock.

The Epistle of St. James is the New Testament expansion of, and comment upon, this Psalm. For another treatment of the subject in the Old, see Isa. xxxiii. 13-16.

<sup>a</sup> הַיֵּלֶךְ צַדִּיקוֹת occurs also Prov. xxviii. 18. Similar is הַיֵּלֶךְ צַדִּיקוֹת, Isa. xxxiii. 15. We find also ה' בְּתַמִּים, lxxxiv. 12. And more fully ה' בְּרָרָה תַּמִּים, ci. 6, and הַיֵּשֶׁר הַיֵּלֶךְ, Mic. ii. 7. There can be no doubt, therefore, from a comparison of these passages, that the adj. תַּמִּים is not a nom. predicate, but is an acc. defining the action of the verb, the adj. being here used as a neut. abstr., so that ה' ה' is lit. “one who walks perfectness ; i.e. makes perfectness his way” ; and so in Isa. l. c. ה' צַדִּיק, “one who makes righteousness his way.” Hupfeld will have it that תַּמִּים is not an adj., but a neuter noun, after the analogy of רָכִיל (Jer. vi. 28 ; Ezek. xxii. 9).

<sup>b</sup> Verse 4 is difficult. In clause (a) the subject and the predicate are not clearly marked. Most take נִמְצָא as the subject, “the reprobate is despised in his eyes” (נ' ב') ; but, as Hupfeld remarks, this is contrary to the accents, which make נִבְזָה the subj. “The despised (contemptible) person is rejected in his eyes.” For this use of נִבְזָה cf. Mal. i. 7 ; ii. 9. Another rendering, however, is possible, and is, perhaps, the true one. We may take both נִבְזָה and נִמְצָא as predicates, the suff. in בְּעֵינָיו as possessive, and render, “he (i.e. the subject of the Psalm) is despised and rejected in his own eyes,” he thinks lowly of himself. The objec-



tion to this is, that נַמְאָס seems too strong a word to express merely a man's low opinion of himself.

לְהָרַע, LXX, τῷ πλῆσιον αὐτοῦ, and so Syr., Vulg., Arab.; but then the Hebrew must have been לְרַעְיוֹ. Nor can it stand for לָרַע, "to the evil," implying that even to the wicked he will keep his oath. The Chald., rightly, "so as to afflict himself." The word is inf. Hiph. of רָעַע for לְהָרַע, and there is a reference, no doubt, to the formula in Lev. v. 4, לְהַרְעִיב אוֹ לְהַרְעִיב, i.e. let the consequences be what they will (to himself, of course), whether good or evil. In our Prayer-Book version the rendering of the LXX seems to have been combined with the true rendering of the Heb., "He that sweareth *unto his neighbor* and disappointeth him not, *though it were to his own hinderance*." See another similar instance of combined readings in xxix. 1.

## PSALM XVI.

SOME have supposed that this Psalm was written by David in time of peril, both because of the prayer with which it opens, "Keep me," etc., and because of the conviction expressed in ver. 10. But if so, the thought of peril is quite swallowed up in the consciousness of God's presence and love. The Psalm is bright with the utterance of a happiness which nothing earthly can touch. It expresses the conviction of a life rather than of any sudden emergency. The living God himself is David's portion and inheritance (ver. 5, 6); stands at his right hand (ver. 8); is the joy of his heart now (ver. 9), and will fill him with joy and gladness for evermore.

A comparison of the Psalm with 1 Sam. xxvi. 19 might suggest that it was written by David when he was in the wilderness of Ziph. "They have driven me out this day," he says, "from the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods." The feeling that he was thus cut off from the service of Jehovah, and compelled to live amongst idolaters, may have led him to write the words in verses 4, 5 of the Psalm. And so again the consciousness that he was "driven out from abiding in the inheritance (נַחֲלָה) of Jehovah," might make him cleave the more steadfastly to the truth, that not the *land* of Jehovah, but *Jehovah himself* was his inheritance.

It is possible, however, that the contrast here brought out so strongly between the happiness to be found in the love of God, and the infatuation and misery of those who had taken some other to be the object of

their worship, may have been suggested by the very position in which an Israelite *dwelling in the land* would be placed with reference to surrounding nations. "We very imperfectly imagine the force of such a contrast," says Isaac Taylor, "as it must have presented itself to an Israelite of the higher and brighter eras of Jewish history. . . . The great controversy of truth was maintained, single-handed, by the pastoral and agricultural tribes of Southern Syria, against all mankind beside. . . . It was a people simple in manners, and not distinguished either in art or science, against nations conspicuous in all that could give lustre and strength to empire. Abstract as well as mechanical philosophy, and the arts of luxury, and great experience in commerce, and much wisdom in government, together with the glories of conquest, contributed to recommend and illustrate the seductive idolatries of the mighty countries by which the clans of Judah, Ephraim, and Benjamin were hemmed in." After observing that the splendor and licentiousness of the idolatrous worship proved too often a snare to a large part of the Jewish people, and that this rendered the protest against it the more needful, he continues, "Nevertheless, though all visible recommendations were possessed by those gods 'of wood, and of stone, and of gold,' yet the poet-king of Israel, after looking to the south, the north, the east, could confidently revert to the heights of Zion and say, that the voice of joy and the acclamations of genuine and holy pleasure were heard in that 'tabernacle of the righteous,' and nowhere else. . . . None could dare to affirm that it was JOY that dwelt in the temples of the demon-gods of Philistia, Phenicia, Syria, Assyria, Egypt; or who would not have blushed to have said that perpetual PLEASURES filled the courts of Chemosh, of Ashtaroth, of Dagon, of Baal, of Mithri? What did the grove conceal? Lust — blood — imposture. What sounds shook the fane? Alternate screams of anguish, and the laughter of mad votaries. What was the priest? The teacher of every vice of which his god was the patron and the example. What were the worshippers? The victims of every woe which superstition and sensuality can gender, and which cruelty can cherish.

"It was not then a blind national prejudice, any more than it was spiritual arrogancy, that made the prophet-poet and king of Israel exult in the distinction of his people. Rather it was a righteous scorn which made him exclaim, when he thought of the errors of the nations, 'their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, neither take their names into my lips.'" — *Saturday Evening*, pp. 303–6, Edit. 1855.

But a few words on the prophecy contained in the latter part of the Psalm. That we have here a prediction, and moreover a *conscious*

prediction, on the part of David, is distinctly affirmed by St. Peter, speaking under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 30, 31). The language which he uses is very remarkable. Alleging verses 8-11 in proof of the resurrection of Christ, he tells us that David here spoke as a prophet (*προφήτης οὖν ὑπάρχων*); that he *knew* that his great descendant would be the Messiah, and that God would place him on his throne (*εἰδώς, ὅτι ὅρκῳ ὤμοσεν αὐτῷ ὁ Θεός, ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ [τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ἀναστήσειν τὸν Χριστὸν] καθίσαι ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ*); and that he *foresaw* and spake of the resurrection of Christ (*προϊδὼν ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χρ.*). It is plain from all this — the *προφήτης*, the *εἰδώς*, the *προϊδὼν* — that, according to St. Peter's view, David not only uttered words which *might* be applied to Christ, but that he used prophetic, that is, inspired language, and knew himself that he was prophesying. But we may still allow a primary and lower reference of the words to David himself, without lessening their prophetic import; in some parts even an exclusive reference, for it is not necessary (and, indeed, seems scarcely possible) to refer the *whole* Psalm to Christ, because a part of it points to him.

[A Michtam<sup>a</sup> of David.]

1 KEEP me, O God; for I have found refuge in thee.

2 I said<sup>b</sup> to Jehovah, "Thou art my Lord :<sup>c</sup>

I have no good beyond thee,<sup>d</sup> —

3 I, together with the saints<sup>e</sup> who are in the land,

And the excellent in whom is all my delight.

2. I HAVE NO GOOD BEYOND THEE.

Lit. My good (my happiness), as in cvi. 5; Job ix. 25, is not beyond or beside thee. (See Critical Note.) The "good" here spoken of is in contrast with the "sorrows" in ver. 4, and answers to the words "my lot, my cup, my inheritance," in ver. 5, 6. For the sentiment, may be compared lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" etc. Hengstenberg observes that, as "Thou art the Lord" is the soul's response to the words in Ex. xx. 2, "I am the Lord thy God"; so this, "Thou alone art my salvation" (or "I have no good beyond thee"), is the response to the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods beside me." This is the one grand

thought which stamps the Psalm: "Thou, O Lord, art my portion, my help, my joy, my all in all."

3. THE SAINTS. In God's land there are others who, like David himself, cleave to God, and with these he claims fellowship. "The saints" are all Israel, set apart as a nation, and severed from the surrounding heathen. See the original designation of Israel to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," Ex. xix. 6. See also Dent. vii. 6.

THE EXCELLENT, properly "the outwardly illustrious"; the root-meaning is that of "glitter, splendor," etc. But the same adjective is applied to the name of God in viii. 1 [2], and hence may contain the idea of a moral, as well as

4 Their sorrows<sup>f</sup> shall be many who take another<sup>g</sup> (god) instead (of Jehovah)—

I will not pour out their drink-offerings of blood ;  
Neither will I take their names upon my lips.

5 Jehovah is the portion<sup>h</sup> of my territory and of my cup.  
Thou maintainest<sup>i</sup> my lot.

6 The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places,  
Yea, I have a fair heritage.<sup>k</sup>

of a merely outward glory. "Eadem causa praeclaros vocat, vel magnificos, quia justitia et sanctitate in quibus relucet Spiritus ejus claritas, nihil pretiosius esse nobis debet." — *Calvin*.

4. WHO TAKE, i.e. in exchange. The word is properly used of obtaining a wife by the payment of a dowry, Ex. xxii. 16 [15]. (See Critical Note).

ANOTHER, i.e. a false god (*das Fremde*, Zunz), or that which is not God (Isa. xlii. 8; xlviii. 11); but purposely, perhaps, put in this indefinite form to signify "all besides God and against God that a man can make an idol of." With such persons David will have nothing to do. He is joined to the saints, and he holds fast on Jehovah. With the utmost strength of abhorrence, he repudiates the worship, horrid and foul, of the surrounding idolaters.

THEIR DRINK-OFFERINGS OF BLOOD: — not literally consisting of blood, but as associated with bloody rites; or offered with hands stained with innocent blood (Delitzsch); or loathsome as if they were of blood (Hupfeld).

THEIR; i.e. the drink-offerings poured out in honor of them. The pronoun "their" refers to the idols implied in the word "another." So deep is David's loathing of idolatry that he will not even pollute his lips by mentioning the names of false gods, in accordance with the command in Ex. xxiii. 13. "The name of other gods ye shall not mention; it shall not be heard in thy mouth."

5. He now expresses more fully his own choice and resolve, enlarging upon what he had said in ver. 2.

THE PORTION OF MY TERRITORY,

lit. "of my share," i.e. the portion assigned to me in the division of the territory. There is an allusion, probably, to the division of the Land of Canaan among the tribes, no part of which was assigned to the tribe of Levi, because, as was expressly declared, Jehovah would be their portion or share (פֶּהָלָה, Num. xviii. 20, the same word which occurs here), and the gifts consecrated to Jehovah the provision for their support (Deut. x. 9; xviii. 1, etc.). That which was true nationally of Levi was true in its deepest spiritual import of every believing Israelite. "What must not he possess," says Savonarola, "who possesses the Possessor of all?" In the words of St. Paul, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

AND OF MY CUP. This also depends on the word "portion." See the same expression, "portion of the cup." xi. 6, but there used in *malam partem*. The "cup" seems to be put by synecdoche for the whole meal. He thus speaks of God as the daily food by which he lives. See our Lord's words in John vi., and connect this with the expression of *trust* with which the Psalm opens.

THOU MAINTAINEST MY LOT. Therefore no creature can rob me of it. "Nor is the third comparison unnecessary," says Calvin, "for it often happens that the rightful owners are thrust out from their own possession, because there is none to defend them. But God hath given himself to us as our inheritance in such wise, that by his aid we are ever maintained in the enjoyment thereof."

6. THE LINES HAVE FALLEN. In



7 I will bless Jehovah who hath given me counsel :

Yea in the night-seasons have my reins admonished me.

8 I have set Jehovah before me always ;

Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore hath my heart rejoiced, and my glory exulted ;

Yea my flesh shall dwell in safety ;

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul to the unseen world ;

Thou wilt not suffer thy beloved<sup>1</sup> to see the pit.<sup>m</sup>

allusion to the ancient custom of marking out plots of land by measuring-lines. See the same phrase, Josh. xvii. 5. The line was said to "fall" as being "thrown" by lot. See Micah ii. 5.

7. In the joyful remembrance that he has such a possession, he breaks forth into a strain of thanksgiving.

WHO HATH GIVEN ME COUNSEL, i.e. through whose grace I have been enabled to choose him for my portion (ver. 5, 6). David confesses that he owes his blessedness to God. This is the divine part: the next clause gives us the human.

MY REINS, here app. = "my heart." (See Job xix. 27, "my reins in my bosom.") God has led me to find my joy in him, and now, in the night seasons, as the time most favorable to quiet thought, I meditate thereon. The heart itself is said to admonish, because it anxiously listens to the voice of God, and seeks to conform itself thereto. Luther, who interprets the words directly of Christ, explains them by a reference to Heb. v. 8 and Matt. xxvi. 41, and sees here the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. He says: "Dictum est supra, Ps. vii. *renes significare delectationes seu vim concupiscibilem, quae tristitias odit, delicias ac quietem amat, quae in omnibus hominibus etiam Christo facit, ut dura et amara sit passio et mors, quam spiritu consilii et fortitudinis oportet superari.*"

8. Further expression of his confidence. Not in the moment of peril only, but at all times has he his eye fixed upon God. AT MY RIGHT HAND. See cix. 31; cx. 5; cxxi. 5. God in David's

eyes is no abstraction, but a person, real, living, walking at his side.

9. MY HEART. . . MY GLORY (i.e. soul) . . . MY FLESH; in other words, the whole man. In like manner "soul," "heart," and "flesh," lxxxiv. 2 [3]; and "soul" and "flesh," lxiii. 1 [2]; "heart" and "flesh," lxxiii. 26. So *πνεῦμα*, *ψυχή*, and *σῶμα*, 1 Thess. v. 23. FLESH, here as always, *the living body*; it never means *the corpse*. So also, the phrase SHALL DWELL IN SAFETY must be understood of *this life*. (See Dent. xxxiii. 29 [28]; Ps. iv. 8 [9]; xxv. 13). Hence these words as they stand in the Hebrew cannot be regarded as a prophecy that Christ's body should rest safely in the tomb. They are the expression of David's confidence that God would watch over his life, and preserve him from death. In this sense, of course, they are also applicable to our Lord.

10. TO THE UNSEEN WORLD. Not as in our version, and in that of Luther and others, "*in hell*." David says nothing about what shall happen to him after death, but is expressing his conviction that God will not leave him to perish — will not give him up to be the prey of the grave, nor suffer him (as follows in the next clause) to see the pit. So too, in Acts ii. 27, St. Peter says, *εἰς ᾧδου* (or as Lachmann reads, *ᾧδην*). This was still more strikingly true of Christ; for though he died, God did not leave him to hades, did not suffer his soul to remain there, or his body to rest in the grave. But that no stress can be laid upon the word "leave," that it means only "give over to," is plain from xxxvii. 33 (cf. xlix. 10 [11]; Job xxxix.

11 Thou wilt make me know the path of life ;  
 Fulness of joy in thy presence,  
 Pleasures at thy right hand for evermore."

14). The sense is, in fact, the same as in Ps. xlix. 15 [16]. See Umbreit, *Brief an die Römer*, S. 172.

THY BELOVED. I have ventured thus to render the word, because it may just as well mean "one who *has obtained* favor of the Lord," as one who *shows* love to God and love to men. See above on Ps. iv. 3 [4], note.<sup>c</sup> If we take it in the latter sense, we must render "Thy pious, or, Thy godly one," not "Thy holy one." The word חַסִּיד (chāsīd) never means "holy." On the question whether this word is singular or plural, as also on the meaning of the phrase "to see the pit," or "to see destruction," see the Critical Note.

11. THE PATH OF LIFE. Not merely, that is, the life of the body. This is shown by the pleasure and the joy spoken of afterwards, which are to be found in God's presence, and in communion with him. *Life*, in the only true sense, is union with God; and from that springs, of necessity, the idea of immortality. It seems impossible to suppose that David, who here expresses such a fulness of confidence in God, such a living, personal relationship to him, could have ever dreamed that such a relationship would end with death. In this Psalm, and in the next, there shines forth the bright hope of everlasting life. Why should men question this? Even the heathen struggled to believe that they should abide after death. Would they to whom God had revealed himself, and who were bound to him in a personal covenant, be left in greater darkness? Impossible. The argument which our Lord used with the Sadducees applies here with especial force — God is not the God of the dead,

but of the living. They to whom God has made himself known, they who are one with him, cannot lose that divine life of which they are made partakers. Immortality (and a resurrection, see on xvii. 15) follows from the life of the spirit. And though probably there would be many fluctuations of belief (see above, note on vi. 5); though the spiritual eye would not be always equally clear; it seems impossible to doubt, when we read passages such as this, that there were times at least when the hope of a life beyond the grave did become distinct and palpable.

At the same time, in the utterance of this confident persuasion and hope, David was carried beyond himself. He spake as a prophet, *knowing* that God had promised of the fruit of his body to raise up Christ to sit on his throne. The hope of his own immortality was based upon, and bound up in, the life of him who was at once his Son and his Lord. What was true of David in the lower sense, was true in the fullest and highest sense of Christ — was only true of David, because it was true of Christ; and is only true of any of us in and through him, according to his own words, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Briefly, then, it must be said that ver. 9–11, so far as they refer to David, express his confidence in God's protecting care in this life and his hope of a life to come. But as a prophecy of Christ they mean all that is drawn from them by St. Peter and St. Paul. In Christ's deliverance from the grave and his resurrection, the whole fulness of their meaning is exhausted. See this well stated by Umbreit, *Brief an die Römer*, S. 172 ff. See also the Critical Notes.

<sup>a</sup> מִזְבֶּהָם. This occurs in the inscription of five other Psalms, lvi.–lx. The meaning of the word has been much questioned. The Rabbinical commentators connect it with זָהָב, "gold," in the sense of "a golden

or precious poem," like the term χρυσᾶ ἔπη, applied to the poems of Pythagoras, for instance; and as in Arabic, the Moallakat are termed "golden." The LXX, στηλογραφία; Vulg., *tituli inscriptio*; Chald., גליפא תריצא, *sculptura recta*, as though it were engraven, marked, stamped with a peculiar impress; as, for instance, with peculiar words and turns of phrase, as Delitzsch tries to show; Jerome, *humilis et simplicis*; Aq., τοῦ ταπεινόφρονος καὶ ἀπλοῦ (Symm., ἀμώμου) τ. Δαυίδ. Others, again, connect כהם with כהב, so that *michtam* would merely be "a writing." But the meaning can be only a matter of conjecture.

Ver. 2, 3. The oldest interpreters, as well as the latest, have found these verses a stumbling-block in their path. I will subjoin the renderings of the principal versions, before I proceed to the criticism of particular words. They may be arranged as follows: (1) The LXX have εἶπα τῷ Κυρίῳ, Κύριός μου εἰ σύ, ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν μου οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχεις. τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς ἐν τῇ γῇ αὐτοῦ ἐθαυμάστωσε, πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτοῖς. This is closely followed (with the exception of one word) by the Vulg., "Dixi Domino; Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus, mirificavit omnes voluntates meas in eis." The Arab. has, "I said to the Lord, thou art my Lord, and, indeed, thou needest not my good actions. He hath manifested among his saints his marvels in his land; and hath wrought in them all his pleasure." (2) The Syr., "I said to the Lord, thou art my Lord, and my good (or happiness) is from thee (ܐܢܝ ܕܝܢܝ ܕܡܝܢ ܐܠܗܝܬ); also to the saints who are in the land, and the illustrious in whom is all my delight" (which apparently means that the happiness of the saints is also from God). Similarly Jerome:

"Dixi Domino, Dominus meus es tu:

Bene mihi non est sine te.

Sanctis qui in terra sunt, et magnificis,

Omnis voluntas mea in eis."

He, however, it would seem, separates verse 3 altogether from verse 2. Symm. also renders בְּלִבִּי בְּיָדַי by ἀγαθόν μοι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνευ σου. With these the Chald. agrees in its interpretation of the latter clause of verse 2, whilst in other respects it is peculiar: "Thou hast said, O my soul, before Jehovah, thou art my God: surely my good is not given save of thee. (As) for the saints that are in the land, they have made known the strength of my power from the beginning; and they that are glorious in good works, all my good will is in them." This is singular: still more singular is (3) the Anglo-Saxon paraphrase: "I have I not said to thee, O Lord, that thou art my God; seeing thou hast given me all the good that I have, and thou hast no need to take aught

again from me? The Lord hath fulfilled all my will, and hath given me power to overcome the nations that were opposed to me, and to overthrow their idols, after mine own will." This widely departs in the last clause from the Latin version which accompanies it, and which is here the same as the Vulg. The former part is an expansion merely of the *bonorum meorum non indiges* of the Vulg.

We come now to the detailed criticism of the separate words.

<sup>b</sup> And first the word אֲמַרְתָּ, according to the present punctuation of the verb, is 2 fem., and this has been defended by supposing, as the Chald. evidently does, an ellipse of נִפְשִׁי. But such an ellipse would be exceedingly harsh here, there being nothing whatever to indicate it. It is better to take אֲמַרְתָּ as a defective reading, with omission of the final ך, for אֲמַרְתִּי. The writing of ת for ה occurs in four other passages, viz. cxi. 13; Job xlii. 2; 1 Kings viii. 48; Ezek. xvi. 59. The reading of two mss. of DeRossi's, אֲמַרְתָּ, is wholly ungrammatical, and merely intended to indicate that the word is here in the first person. The omission of the ך may have been due to rapid pronunciation (Hitzig), or it may indicate an Aramaic form, or be analogous to 2 sing. fem. where the omission of the final ך has become constant.

<sup>c</sup> אֲדָרִי. This form commonly denotes the divine name absolutely (without the suffix), "the Lord." But here it probably stands, as in xxxv. 23, as = אֲדָרִי, "my Lord." So the LXX, Syr., and Vulg. take it.

<sup>d</sup> טוֹבֹתַי בִּלְעָלָהּ, "my good, i.e. my happiness, the prosperity which I enjoy," etc. (not as Aq., "my goodness is not beyond thee"). This, which is substantially the rendering of the Syr., Symm., and Jerome, seems to be the best. It is doubtful, however, whether עַל should be rendered "besides," or "beyond." For the former, Ex. xx. 3, עַל פָּנָי, is usually quoted, though it is scarcely a strict parallel; for the latter, lxxxix. 8; Gen. xlix. 26. Kimchi and Rashi render "my happiness is not (incumbent) upon thee—thou art not bound to do me good," in which sense עַל occurs Ezra x. 12; Prov. vii. 14. But this does not suit the context. Hupfeld suggests that בִּלְ may here mean "only," *non nisi*, "My happiness rests only upon thee." But this seems questionable; and the difficulty might be avoided by a very slight emendation. We have only to read בִּלְ for בִּלְ, and then we get "My happiness rests wholly upon thee." [Since writing the above, I find that this very natural correction is actually the reading of two mss.]

<sup>e</sup> לְקִרְוֵשִׁים. The great difficulty no doubt begins with this verse. And the first question is, Does the verse form a complete whole in itself, or is it connected with the preceding, or with the following verse?



Those who regard it as containing an independent proposition, render : (1) "As for the holy ones who are in the land, and the noble, all my delight is in them." But the objections to this are, first, that this use of  $\text{לִּי}$  before the *subject* is questionable, though it has been defended by Isa. xxxii. 1. And next, that no satisfactory example can be alleged of the use of the stat. constr. for the absol. ;  $\text{אֲהִיְיָ כ' ח' ב'}$  is a relative clause with the common omission of the relative. Other instances of the use of the stat. constr. before the relative clause are  $\text{עַם לֹא יִרְעָתִי}$ , xviii. 44 ;  $\text{שָׁפַח לִי ר'$ , lxxxi. 6. See also lvi. 4 ; xc. 15 (a double example), Job xviii. 21 ; Isa. xxix. 1. Or (2) "As for the saints, etc. . . they are the excellent, in whom is all my delight," the  $\text{וְ}$  in  $\text{וְאֲהִיְיָ}$  thus introducing the apodosis. But the  $\text{וְ}$  could scarcely thus stand alone, and we should certainly expect the demonstrative pronoun in the second clause. Accordingly Delitzsch transfers the  $\text{וְ}$  to the beginning of the verse ( $\text{וְלִקְרוֹשִׁים}$ ), and makes the demonstr.  $\text{הֵמָּה}$  begin the apodosis. He also (as many others do) makes the  $\text{לִּי}$  in this verse co-ordinate with the  $\text{לִּי}$  in verse 2. "I said to (or, of) Jehovah," . . . "I said to the saints, etc., they are the noble in whom is all my delight ;" i.e. I love God, and I love his saints, and I keep aloof from all idolaters. Others again, supposing the  $\text{לִּי}$  as above to depend on  $\text{אֲהִיְיָ}$ , carry on the constr. into the next verse, "I said to the saints, etc. . . their sorrows shall be multiplied." Ewald renders, "as for the saints that are in the land, and the noble who have all my love — many are their gods, they take strange gods instead [of the true God] — they whose bloody drink-offerings I cannot offer, nor take their names upon my lips." He supposes the poet *in exile* to be contrasting his own lot — happy as he was, even in a far land, because Jehovah was with him — with the lot of those who, though "called to be saints," as belonging to the chosen people, had renounced their privileges, and had become worshippers of idols. But (1) the allusion to "the land" does not compel us to suppose that the Psalmist himself was an exile. (2) Those who had become idolaters would hardly still be called  $\text{קְרוֹשִׁים}$  ; and (3) the construction is somewhat awkward when thus carried on from ver. 3 into ver. 4. On the whole, however, it seems more satisfactory to connect this verse with the preceding. We have, then, still a choice of renderings : (a) we may repeat  $\text{בְּלִי־עֲלֵיךָ}$  from the preceding verse : "There is nothing beyond thee to the saints who," etc. (so Mendelssohn). (b) We may take  $\text{לִּי}$  in the sense of "belonging to," "joining myself to," and the passage would mean, "I have no good beyond thee, belonging as I do to the fellowship of the saints, and the noble in whom," etc. Indeed, some such meaning seems to be required by the context ; for it

is evident that it is the design of the Psalmist to contrast his own happy lot, and that of others who, like himself, had found their happiness in Jehovah, with the miserable condition of those "whose sorrows were increased," because they went after other gods.

<sup>f</sup> עֲצָבוֹתָם. The first clause of this verse has again been very differently interpreted. The LXX, ἐπληθύνθησαν αἱ ἀσθένειαι αὐτῶν, μετὰ ταῦτα ἐράχυναν, which is followed by the Vulg. and Arab. The Syr. also renders עֲצָבוֹתָם by כַּלְסָסָם, "their sorrows." On the other hand, the Chald., Jerome, and Theod. (see Montef.'s note) take עֲצָ to mean "their idols"; The Chald., "They multiply their idols, and afterwards hasten to offer their gifts"; Jerome, "Multiplicabantur idola eorum post tergum sequentium." So far as the etymology goes, the word עֲצָ might no doubt mean either "idols" or "sorrows," but *in this form* it only occurs in the latter sense, cxlvii. 3; Job ix. 28, whereas the form עֲצָבִים is used exclusively of idols.

<sup>g</sup> אֲחֵר, "another," i.e. a false god — not only in the plur. with אֲחֵרִים (Ex. xx. 3; xxiii. 13, etc.), but in sing. and absolutely, Isa. xlii. 8; xlviii. 11.

מָהֵר, *not* "they hasten," which is the meaning of the verb only in the Piel. In Kal it signifies "to buy" (Ex. xxii. 15); here, according to the original meaning of the root, "to exchange, to barter." Cf. הָמִיר in the same sense, cvi. 20; Hos. iv. 7; Jer. ii. 11.

<sup>h</sup> מָנָה, stat. constr. of מָנָה, with ā instead of ă, owing to the omission of the radical י or ר. The proper stat. constr. of מָנָה would be מָנִיחַ, whence מָנִיחַ and (to mark the omission of the י) מָנֵחַ. The י appears in the plur. מָנִיחוֹת, Neh. xii. 57, for which we have מ in the alt. form. v. 44, מָנְאוֹת. This, which is beyond all doubt the true explanation of the appearance of the long vowel instead of the short, is due to Hupfeld. See his note on Ps. xi. 6, where the same form occurs. Fürst (Concord. in v. מָנֵחַ) explains these forms and similar nouns as formed by the addition of ה to the fem. termination אָ.

<sup>i</sup> הִימְרָה. App. a fut. Hiph. from a root יִמַּךְ, which Schultens assumes and supposes to be kindred with an Arab. root يَمَكُ, *amplum esse*, "Thou enlargest my lot." But no such verb exists either in Heb. or Arab. It is better, therefore, to take it as (by incorrect orthography) = הִימָה, part. Kal of הִמַּךְ, which means both "to hold in the hand" (Amos i. 5; Prov. xxxi. 19), and "to support with the hand" (xvii. 5; xli. 13, etc.) No other exactly analogous form occurs, but there is a similar introduction of י in the form סִיִּיב, 2 Kings viii. 21.

<sup>k</sup> נַחֲלָתִי for נַחֲלָתִי, parallel with נַחֲלָתִי above. Sim. זְמֶרֶת, Ex. xv. 2 (after עֲזִי). See the same phrase repeated, Isa. xii. 2; Ps. cxviii. 14,

or it may be for נַחֲלָה, as עֲזָרָה for עֲזָרָה, lx. 13; cviii. 13. See also similar forms, cxxxii. 4; Num. xi. 32; Jonah iv. 7. The LXX and the Syr. support the former explanation, as they express the pronoun; the Chald. and Jerome ("haereditas speciosissima mea est") the latter. Either, therefore, (1) "my inheritance pleases me well," or (2) "it is an inheritance which pleases me well" (lit. is fair for me, or in my estimation). Comp. civ. 34, רַעֲרֵב עָלָיו, "may it please him, be sweet for him."

<sup>1</sup> חַסִּידֶיךָ. Does this stand for חַסִּידֶיךָ, "thy beloved ones" (plur.), or are we to adopt the correction of the Masoretes, who give חַסִּידֶיךָ as the K'ri? The plur. has found favor with most of the modern critics (except Delitzsch and Stier); but the weight of critical authority is decidedly in favor of the sing. All the ancient versions, without exception, have the singular. So also have St. Peter (Acts ii. 27) and St. Paul (xiii. 35). Further, the singular is found in the Babylon Talmud, the Midrash Tehillim, the Yalkut Shimeoni, and many of the Rabbinical writers. It is also the reading of 269 mss. (being more than half of the existing number); whilst in seven others the י is added by a later hand, and in four it is crossed out. Moreover, among these are the oldest and best mss. On the other hand, in those in which the K'th'bh stands, it is with the punctuation of the singular, and often with the marginal annotation יחיד, "the Yod is superfluous." Against all this it is in vain to urge that the plur., as the more difficult reading, ought to be retained. The plur. certainly *might* stand, for the Psalmist had already spoken of other "saints in the land," as well as of himself, and the change of number is not more abrupt than the אֱלֹהֵינוּ in xl. 6. Nor would this overthrow the reference to Christ. That which is true of the members, is true in its highest sense of the head, and is only true of the members because they are joined to the head. But the weight of evidence clearly supports the singular, and this must have been felt from the earliest times; for it would have been to the interest of the Jews to have retained only the K'th'bh.

<sup>m</sup> שָׁחָה. This is rendered here by the LXX διαφθοράν, though elsewhere they give other equivalents. In vii. 16; xciv. 13; Prov. xxvi. 27, they have βόθρος; all the other ancient interpreters, without exception, give the meaning of "corruption," in this passage. But to this it has been objected, that the word elsewhere means either "a pit," or "the grave," and that such must be its meaning, because it is formed from the r. שָׁחָה, "to sink down," not from the r. שָׁחָה, "to destroy." Only one passage can be alleged, viz. Job xvii. 14, where שָׁחָה seems to require the rendering "corruption," and that because of the parallelism with

the word "worm." Hence Winer's *Simonis* gives in that one passage the signification *corruptio, putredo*. But, as Gesen. (*Thesaur.* v. שׁוּר) remarks, "grave" may be the parallel to "worm," as well as "corruption." He, however, admits the meaning "destruction" in Job xxxiii. 18, 22, 30; "*exitium, interitus* (hoc etiam ex foveae vel ipsius sepulcri imagine ductum)." What then, it may be asked, becomes of St. Paul's argument (Acts xiii. 35–37), that "David did see *corruption*, whereas he whom God raised up saw no *corruption*?" It is not essentially shaken. In the first place, even if we follow the LXX, we ought to translate, "David did see *destruction*," etc.; for διαφθορά means "destruction," not "corruption" (see their rendering of ix. 15; xxxv. 7); and in the next, if we adhere to the Hebrew, "David did *see the grave*, but he (Christ), . . . did not *see the grave*," the argument is still true if only we take the phrase "to see the grave" in its proper acceptance of dying as men generally do,—dying and abiding in death. So the expression occurs xlix. 9 [10]. Cf. lxxxix. 48 [49], "see death." Christ did not see the grave in the same sense as David did; for he could not be holden of it. That this is the true meaning of "seeing the grave," is further established by the use of the opp. phrase, "seeing life," i.e. abiding, remaining alive. This is substantially the interpretation of Hengstenberg (stigmatized by Dr. Pusey, *Daniel*, p. 501, as an "unhappy compromise,") and of Umbreit, *Brief an die Römer*, S. 174, who, though he admits that שׁוּר may mean "corruption," denies any direct prediction here of the resurrection of Christ.

## PSALM XVII.

IN this Psalm a servant of God, conscious of his own uprightness, and surrounded by enemies, prays to be kept from the evil world, and from evil men who persecute him; and then from the dark present looks forward with joy to the bright future.

Every tried and tempted servant of God may find in it the touchstone whereby to prove himself; the sure refuge whither to betake himself; the hope which is the anchor of the soul, and which entereth within the veil. The Psalm may be, as the inscription states, a Psalm of David; and if so, we may probably attribute its composition to the time of Saul's persecution.

It may be divided into three strophes:

I. The Psalmist's confidence in his appeal to God (ver. 1–5).



(a) This is based upon the righteousness of his cause, and the absence of all hypocrisy in his prayer (ver. 1, 2).

(b) The consciousness of this integrity further declared, and that even on the closest scrutiny. Both heart (ver. 3) and life (ver. 4, 5) are free from reproach, notwithstanding the evil by which he is surrounded.

II. Prayer to be kept in the evil world (ver. 6-12).

(a) The appeal now lies to God's marvellous loving-kindness and tender affection, that he may be protected against his enemies.

(b) The description of their bitterness (ver. 9), their pride (ver. 10), and their relentless persecution (ver. 11, 12) is then given.

III. The spirit of the world, and the spirit which is of God (ver. 13-15).

(a) Prayer that the sword of Jehovah may overtake his enemies.

(b) And then the broad contrast, not without its consolation; their portion, at the best, is for this life, and then perishes; mine is in the presence and the vision of God, and, therefore, cannot be taken from me.

### [A Prayer of David.]

I. 1 HEAR, O Jehovah, righteousness;

Hearken to my cry;

Give ear to my prayer

Which (is uttered) by no deceitful lips.

2 From thy presence let my judgment go forth;

Thine eyes behold uprightness!

3 Thou hast proved my heart;

Thou hast visited (me) by night;

Thou hast tried me (and) findest no evil thought<sup>a</sup> in me,

Neither doth my mouth transgress.

1. Not only a righteous cause, but a righteous prayer, offered in all sincerity, with no hypocritical reserve or pretence, are urged as motives why God should hear him. Calvin remarks on the importance of joining prayer to the testimony of a good conscience, lest we defraud God of his honor by not committing all judgment to him.

2. In this verse both verbs may be either *presents* or *optatives*. Hence we

may render, (1) "Let my sentence . . . may thine eyes behold," etc.; so the LXX, Syr., Vulg., and Arab.; or (2) "Thy sentence goes forth . . . thine eyes behold," etc.; or (3) the first verb may be opt., and the second present, which is Hupfeld's rendering; and so also Stier and Mendelssohn.

3. This has given offence to some as an over-bold assertion of innocence. Hence the Jewish interpreters supposed

- 4 As for <sup>b</sup> the doings of men — by the word of thy lips  
 I have kept (me from) the ways of the destroyer :  
 5 Holding fast <sup>c</sup> with my goings in thy paths,  
 My footsteps have not been moved.

II. 6 As for me — I have called upon thee ; for thou answerest me, O God :

Incline thine ear unto me ; hear my speech.

- 7 Show thy marvellous <sup>d</sup> loving-kindnesses, O thou that  
 savest those who find refuge (in thee)  
 From them that lift themselves up against thy right  
 hand.

it to have been written by David before his fall. Others, as Zunz, take the verbs as optative. "Prüfst du mein Herz . . . dass du nichts fändest! Hab' ich Böses gesonnen, dass es nicht gehe über meinen Mund"! But it is not absolute innocence which the Psalmist here asserts: he is not indulging in self-righteous boasting, but appealing to God as knowing his uprightness of heart and honesty of purpose. Calvin gives the sense very well: "Tu, Domine, qui creando omnes cordis mei sensus tenes, sicuti tuum est probare homines, optime nosti *me non esse duplicem nec quicquam fraudis intus alere*." The latter part of this verse might be rendered, with Delitzsch: Thou hast tried me, and findest nothing: Have I cherished an evil thought? — it shall not pass my mouth.

for (1) the Milra accent in זמרי is not conclusive against it (see Critical Note), and (2) עבר in itself does not seem to be used for *transgress* or *sin*.

HAST PROVED . . . HAST TRIED; both words used of the testing of metals, and especially the latter, which means properly to melt in the fire, so as to separate the dross from the ore.

By NIGHT, as the season of quiet thought and self-examination. Cf. iv. 4 [5]; xvi. 7.

4. THE DOINGS OF MEN, i.e. the common course of action of worldly men. "Men" = the great mass of men (opposed to the "doings of Jehovah," xxviii.

5), and here contrasted with "the word of God." Comp. the expression "after the manner of men" (Hos. vi. 7; Job xxxi. 33). Whatever men in general may do or say, I have but one guide and rule of action, viz. thy word. This is the first mention of the opposition to which he was exposed, and of that contrast which comes out more clearly in the next strophe, and which is completed in the last.

I HAVE KEPT (ME FROM); lit. "I have watched, observed," but here evidently with the further notion of watching so as to avoid; and so rightly Symm., ἐγὼ ἐφύλαξάμην ὁδοῦ παραβάτου. The pron. is emphatic, as again in ver. 6, and may be explained both by the strong sense on the one hand of the Psalmist's uprightness and consequent relation to God, and on the other as a tacit opposition to the enemies spoken of in ver. 9, 10. He seems anxious, as it were, to place himself in his distinct and proper character before God, and to isolate himself from the wicked.

5. See Job xxiii. 11; Ps. xli. 12 [13].

6-12. The prayer to be kept in the evil world. The earnest, affectionate cleaving to God, the prayer to be hidden in the shadow of his wings, is proof enough that the former part of the Psalm is no merely self-righteous boast.

7. SHOW, etc.; lit. "make wonderful," i.e. exhibit in a marked manner thy loving-kindness; which looks at first

- 8 Keep me as the apple—as the pupil—of an eye,  
 Hide me in the shadow of thy wings,  
 9 Because of the wicked who would destroy me,  
 (Because of) mine enemies who eagerly compass me  
 about.  
 10 (In) their fat have they enclosed (themselves),  
 With their mouth they speak proudly.  
 11 Whithersoever we go, have they now surrounded us ;  
 Their eyes do they set to cast (us) down to the earth,  
 12 Like as a lion that is greedy to ravin,  
 And as a young lion lurking in (his) lair.

sight as if David expected a special miracle to be wrought in his favor. Hence Calvin excuses the prayer by the greatness of the strait and peril which drove him to ask for this extraordinary deliverance. But the truth is, that the notion contained in the verb only expresses the general *well-known* character of God's loving-kindness, which is always wonderful (so De Muys, "exsere omnem *illam* mirificam tuam clementiam"), and this David desires to experience as others have experienced it before him, as follows.

THOSE WHO FIND REFUGE, absol. as Prov. xiv. 26 ; comp. *οἱ καταφυγόντες*, Heb. vi. 18.

8. Both the images in this verse, alike expressive of the affection of the Psalmist and of his deep sense of God's tender care and love to him, are borrowed from the beautiful passage in Deut. xxxii. 10, 11. For the former, see also Zech. ii. 8. The latter occurs frequently. In the New Testament our Lord uses the still more tender image of the hen gathering her brood under her wings (Matt. xxiii. 37).

9. EAGERLY ; lit. "with the soul," i.e. with the longing desire so destroy me. (So the Chald., "with the desire of their souls.") Others, "my enemies against the soul" (so the Syr., "enemies of my soul"), i.e. "my deadly enemies" ; but this is harsh, especially with the omission of the pronoun (we should expect

it to be expressed), and the former is supported by xxvii. 12 ; xli. 2 [3], where the word "soul" is used in the same way.

10. IN THEIR FAT, etc. ; lit. "Their fat have they shut up." This may refer both to the outward condition and the state of heart. These men led a luxurious and selfish life (as is further said, ver. 14), in consequence of which they had become proud and unfeeling. For this double meaning of "fatness," comp. on the one hand, Deut. xxxii. 15 ; Job xv. 27, and on the other, Ps. cxix. 70 ; Isa. vi. 10. Others render, "they have closed their heart" (see for this meaning of the word, Gesen. *Thesaur* in v., and Hupfeld in his *Comm.*), i.e. they have no feeling of compassion, like *κλείειν τὰ σπλάγχνα*, 1 John iii. 17, and so Theodoret, *ἀποκλείσαντες εὐσπλαγχνίαν* = *εὐνοίαν καὶ φιλαδελφίαν*.

11. WHITHERSOEVER WE GO ; lit. "Our steps, have they now surrounded us," there being thus a double object of the verb, viz. the person and the part of the person, just as in iii. 7 [8], "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies (on) the cheek-bone."

TO CAST DOWN, in same sense as in xviii. 9 [10] ; lxii. 4 [5]. No object is expressed. We may supply "us" or "our steps," or more widely, "whatever comes in their way."

12. LIKE AS A LION ; lit. "his likeness is (that of) a lion" ; where the sing. may

III. 13 Arise, O Jehovah, go forth to meet him, cast him down ;  
Deliver my soul from the wicked, by thy sword.

14 From men, O Jehovah, by thy hand — from men of the  
world,°

Whose portion is in (this) life, and whose belly thou  
fillest with thy treasures,

Who are satisfied with sons, and leave their substance  
to their children.

be distributive, viz. each of them is as a lion ; or one particular enemy, as leader of the rest, may be present to his mind.

13. If the enemy be thus fierce and powerful, the more need for a powerful protector. The image is a common one in the Psalms, but may have been suggested in the first instance by David's personal experience. See note on iii. 7 [8].

GO FORTH TO MEET HIM; just as David himself went forth, to meet first the lion and the bear, and afterwards the champion of Gath.

BY THY SWORD, and in ver. 14, BY THY HAND. These words are accusatives, further defining the action of the verbs: they denote the *instrument with which* the deliverance was to be effected, and are not in apposition with the nouns after which they are placed. David does not here regard the wicked as the sword of God, as Isaiah (x. 5) does the Assyrian as the rod of his anger — a thought which would be quite at variance with the whole scope of the Psalm ; but calls upon God to destroy them.

14. MEN OF THE WORLD. The word here used for "world" (*cheled*) denotes the transitory nature of the world as a thing of *time*. Men of the world are those who have made it their home, and who, together with the world and the lust thereof, are passing away. (Comp. "men of the earth," Ps. x. 18.) In the New Testament they are the *κόσμος* of St. John, and the *νίαι τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, Lukexvi. 8. Being thus worldly-minded, they have *their portion* in life, i.e. in the brief years of their existence upon earth. (For this absolute use of the word "life"

see Eccl. vi. 12 ; ix. 9.) Then this love of the world is opposed to the love of the Father, not the present to the future, so much as the temporal, to the eternal, the world to God. The contrast to "their portion in this life" is to be found in xvi. 5, "Jehovah is my portion," and in ver. 15 of this Psalm. On the one side, the outward, the transitory, the unreal ; on the other, the inward, the abiding, the true. We have here a view of the *world* and of *life* very remarkable for the Old Testament — a kind of anticipation of the contrast between the flesh and the spirit which St. Paul gives us, or the love of the world and of God of which St. John speaks.

15. Worldly men have their *satisfaction* in this life, in treasures, in children ; David hopes to be *satisfied* with the likeness, or rather real, manifest *bodily form* (תְּצַמֶּנִּי) of God. The personal pron. stands emphatically at the beginning of the verse, in order to mark the contrast between his own feelings and those of the men of the world. He hopes (as Job also does, xix. 26, 27) to see God. (The parallel of the next clause shows that this must mean more than merely "to enjoy his favor, the light of his countenance," etc., as in xi. 7). There is an allusion probably to such a manifestation of God as that made to Moses, Numb. xii. 8, where God declares that with Moses he will speak "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches ; and the similitude (rather *form*, the same word as here) of Jehovah shall he behold."

WHEN I AWAKE. How are we to understand these words ? (1) Certainly



15 As for me — in righteousness let me behold thy face ;  
Let me be satisfied, when I awake, with thine image.

not “when I wake up from sleep,” as Ewald and others explain, because of the reference to the night in ver. 3. This would give a lean and hungry sense indeed. Why should David expect a clear vision of God, and especially of his form, on the following morning, or on the morning of any day, more than at any other time? (2) Nor, again, does he mean by “waking,” a deliverance from the present night of sorrow and suffering, as though he would say, This, my sorrow, shall pass away, and then I shall see God as my deliverer (which may perhaps be the meaning of the hope which Job expresses, chap. xix). So Calvin explains the “waking” of which David speaks: “ut tantundem valeat ac respirare a tristitia,” and supposes him to have been so worn out by his afflictions as to have fallen into a kind of sleep or lethargy. But this seems an inadequate explanation. The night might be used as a figure of suffering, but the sufferer would scarcely be said to *sleep* in his suffering, and then to awake out of it. I cannot doubt that the reference is to “the waking from the sleep of death,” and therefore to a resurrection. In opposition to this interpretation, it is commonly asserted that the truth of a resurrection had not yet been revealed, and that, consequently, if we find the doctrine here, the Psalm must

be of later date — after the Exile (so De Wette). But this is mere assertion. First, as regards the use of the figure. “Waking” from death occurs in 2 Kings iv. 31. Death is spoken of as a sleep from which there is no awaking; Job xiv. 12; Jer. li. 39. Next, “Awake — ye that sleep in the dust,” (Isa. xxvi. 19), plainly refers to the resurrection. (Hence critics who think this truth *could not* be known before the Exile, are obliged to suppose that this chapter was written *after* that time). Again, why should not David have attained, in some degree, to the knowledge of a truth which in later times was so clearly revealed as it was to Ezekiel (who makes use of it as the image of the resurrection of Israel, xxxvii. 1–14) and to Daniel (xii. 2)? Is it astonishing that a truth should first appear somewhat dimly expressed, and afterwards shine with a greater brightness? Is it strange that a conviction should be possessed and uttered by one man ages before it becomes the common heritage of all? May there not be even now truths slumbering in the Bible which have not yet been fully grasped by Christian men? In all times there are men whom God takes into a nearer communion with himself, and who attain to an insight and an utterance beyond that of the dull, unripe world.

<sup>a</sup> זְמוּרָה. This looks like 1 perf. of זָמַם, and so perhaps it was taken by the Chald., which, however, seems to fluctuate in its rendering; but this is not in accordance with the accent, which is on the *last syllable*. [Delitzsch, however, refers to Deut. xxxii. 41; Isa. xlv. 16, as containing examples of similar accentuation of the perfect.] Nor is it a noun with suff. from זָמַה = זָמַה (Gesen. *Lex.*), but an *infinitive* of verb זָמַע, like חָפִיז, חָפִיזָה, חָפִיזָה, with the fem. termination יָזַת, borrowed from verbs לָזַח. According to the Masoretic punctuation, it is to be joined to the words following. Hence many render, “My thought varies not from (lit. passes not by חָפִיזָה) my mouth,” i.e. I do not think one thing and say another; others, taking פִּי as subj., not as obj., “My

mouth goes not beyond my thought," i.e. I do not say more than I think. But זַמַּח and זַמָּה commonly refer to *evil* thoughts and devices (see x. 4). Hence it would be better to render, "No evil thought of mine passes over my mouth." But it seems best, following most of the older versions, to connect זַמָּה with the preceding words. So the LXX, οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀδικία. So too the Syr., Chald. (altern.), Arab., and Aeth., but *not* Jerome (as Hupfeld asserts), at least not in the best mss., which have "Cogitatio mea utinam non transisset os meum"; others, however, read, "Non invenisti cogitationes meas."

<sup>b</sup> זַמָּה. The זַ is here either the prep. of general reference, "with regard to," or the זַ of *time*, as in xxxii. 6, זַמָּה (Hupfeld), or *condition*, as in lxix. 22 (Delitzsch). But neither of these instances is exactly parallel to that in the text. Many of the older interpreters join these words with the preceding verse. The LXX, ὅπως ἂν μὴ λαλήσῃ τὸ στόμα μου τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων; Vulg., "Non loquatur os meum opera hominum"; Syr., "Nor have the works of men passed over my mouth in the discourse of [my] lips."

<sup>c</sup> זַמָּה. The inf. absol. perhaps used for the finite verb (not for the imperat., which is against the connection, and moreover would require a fut. instead of a pret. in the next member); and either for the 1st pers. sing., or for 3d pers. plur., "I have held with my goings," or, "my goings have held." Or the infin. may be (as Hupfeld suggests) like the Latin gerund in *-do*, the first member of this verse being connected either with the last of ver. 4, "I have kept me ... by holding fast," etc., or with the one immediately following, "By holding fast, my footsteps have not moved." See the same constr. in xxxv. 15, 16.

<sup>d</sup> זַמָּה, prop. "separate," "set apart," but with the further idea of something that is *wonderful* or *miraculous* = זַמָּה. Comp. Ex. xxxiii. 16 and Ps. cxxxix. 14, and see above, note on iv. 4. See the same phrase in xxxi. 22, זַמָּה זַמָּה. The LXX, θαυμάστωσον τὰ ἐλέη σου. In the same way the idea contained in the verb passes over to the noun in Isa. xxviii. 29, זַמָּה זַמָּה.

<sup>e</sup> זַמָּה = זַמָּה, αἰών, *aevum*, prop. "time," "life-time," xxxix. 6; lxxxix. 48 (זַמָּה זַמָּה, *ego quantilli sim aevi*), Job xi. 17 (*life* itself); then, that which is subject to time, *the world* (comp. the later uses of זַמָּה, αἰών, and *saeculum*), as in xlix. 2, זַמָּה, "inhabitants of the world." The root signif. is probably that of the Syr. زاح, "to creep, to crawl," whence in Heb. זָחַל and words from the same root in Syr. and Arab. mean "a mole." The idea therefore of זַמָּה is that of time as *slowly creeping on*. In Arab. خلد is "to grow gradually old."

## PSALM XVIII.

IN this magnificent hymn the royal poet sketches in a few grand outlines the tale of his life — the record of his marvellous deliverances and of the victories which Jehovah had given him — the record, too, of his own heart, the truth of its affection towards God, and the integrity of purpose by which it had ever been influenced. Throughout that singularly chequered life — hunted as he had been by Saul before he came to the throne, and harassed perpetually after he became king by rivals who disputed his authority and endeavored to steal away the hearts of his people, compelled to fly for his life before his own son, and engaged afterwards in long and fierce wars with foreign nations — one thing had never forsaken him — the love and the presence of Jehovah. By his help he had subdued every enemy, and now, in his old age, looking back with devout thankfulness on the past, he sings this great song of praise to the God of his life. With a heart full of love, he will tell *how* Jehovah delivered him, and then there rises before the eye of his mind the whole force and magnitude of the peril from which he had escaped. So much the more wonderful appears the deliverance, which, accordingly, he represents in a bold poetical figure, as a stooping of the Most High from heaven to save him; who comes, as he came of old to Sinai, with all the terror and gloom of earthquake and tempest and thick darkness. But God delivers those only who trust in him, and who are like him. There must be an inner life of communion with God, if man will know his mercy. Hence David passes on to that covenant relationship in which he had stood to God. He had ever been a true Israelite; and therefore God, the true God of Israel, had dealt with him accordingly. And thus it is at the last that the servant of Jehovah finds his reward. Jehovah, to whom he had ever looked, did not forsake him, but girded him with strength to the battle, and made even distant nations the vassals of his sway.

The hymn concludes, as it had opened, with a joyful thanksgiving to Jehovah who had done so great things for him.

The inscription, which informs us that this hymn was composed towards the close of David's life, is confirmed by the fact that we have the same account given of its composition in 2 Sam. xxii., where this hymn is also found, though with a number of variations. The internal evidence, too, points in the same direction; for we learn from ver. 34 [35] and 43 [44] that the poet is both warrior and king; and every part of the description suits the events and circumstances of David's life better than those of any other monarch.

The Psalm consists of three principle divisions or strophes, together with an introduction and conclusion :

I. Introduction, setting forth all that Jehovah is to the Psalmist (ver. 1-3).

II. Strophe I. The record of David's sufferings and peril, and the mighty deliverance by which he was rescued (ver. 4-19).

III. Strophe II. The reason for this deliverance as based upon the character of God and the principles of his moral government (ver. 20-30).

IV. Strophe III. The blessings which he had received in his life ; his own preservation and that of his race (ver. 28) ; help and strength in battle, rule over all enemies (ver. 31-45).

V. Conclusion, consisting of a joyful thanksgiving and acknowledgment of all God's mercies (ver. 46-50).

[For the Precentor. (A Psalm) of David, the servant of Jehovah, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this Song, in the day that Jehovah delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul; and he said:]

1 FERVENTLY do I love thee, O Jehovah, my strength.

2 Jehovah (is) my stronghold and my fortress, and my deliverer,

My God is my rock wherein I find refuge,

My shield and horn of my salvation, my high tower.

**SERVANT OF JEHOVAH.** Also in the inscr. of Ps. xxxvi., and, in the mouth of God, "my servant," lxxxix. 3 [4], 20 [21], as 2 Sam. iii. 18 ; vii. 5. David is so called in a special sense as one put in office, and commissioned by God. The same title is applied also to Moses, Joshua, the prophets, the angels, etc., as sent by God to do his work. It is strictly an *official* designation, but is never applied by any person to himself. In this it differs from the *δοῦλος Θεοῦ* (*Χριστοῦ*) of the New Testament. (Philip. i. 1 ; Tit. i. 1.)

1-3. Looking back upon his eventful life, a life full of peril and full of mercy, David pours out his heart, first in the expression of strong and tender love (*רחם*, the verb in Kal, and in this meaning, occurs only here) to his God ; and then in the attempt to set forth in some measure, by employing one figure after

another, all that God had been to him during the days of his pilgrimage.

The images, which are most of them of a martial character, are borrowed from the experience of David's life, and the perpetual struggles in which he was engaged. Some of them were suggested by the natural configuration of Palestine. Amid the "rocks" and "fastnesses" of his native land, and the "high tower" perched on some inaccessible crag, he, with his band of outlaws, had often found a safe hiding-place from the wrath of Saul.

The "shield" and the "horn" seem to stand respectively for all weapons of *defence* and *offence*. The shield, as covering the body ; the horn, as a symbol of strength in attack (itself an image, borrowed from animals who push with their horns ; Comp. 1 Kings xxii. 11). The image is very common in the



3 I will call upon Jehovah, who is worthy to be praised,<sup>a</sup>  
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4 The bands of death compassed me,  
And the floods of ungodliness<sup>d</sup> made me afraid.<sup>e</sup>

5 The bands of hell surrounded me,  
The snares of death came upon me.

6 In my distress I called upon Jehovah,  
And unto my God (did) I cry:  
He heard my voice out of his temple,  
And my cry before him came unto his ears.

**Psalter.** For a like crowding together of metaphors in address to God, see the opening of Psalms xxxi. and lxxi.

3. I WILL CALL. The futures in this verse do not express a present resolution, but are either (1) *aorists*, and mark the constant habit of his past life = "it has ever been my wont to call upon Jehovah, and he has saved me," a statement which is then further expanded in what follows; or (2) they may express the conviction of faith = "whenever I cry, I shall be delivered." (See note on iii. 4 [5].) Then follows the record of his past experience, which gives the reason both for his *love* of Jehovah, and his prayer to him.

4-6. As he looks back on the past, he gathers into one all the perils to which he had been exposed, all the sufferings which he had endured, and so measures them not by the depth or intensity of any one, but by their aggregated volume and pressure. It was as if they had risen and swelled above him, wave upon wave; he had been as a swimmer, beaten and buffeted to and fro till his strength was spent, and it had like to have gone hard with him for his life. He was sinking (comp. xxx. 3 [4]; xxxii. 6; xl. 2 [3]; lxix. 1, 2 [2, 3], and, like Jonah, seemed beyond reach of succor (Jon. ii. 4, 6, 7); — or, varying the figure, he had been taken in the toils which death, like a mighty hunter, had cast about him (ver. 5). But even in this his uttermost strait he was not beyond the reach of

God's arm. Neither the depths of the sea nor the gates of death can resist Jehovah's power. Therefore, when from the lowest depths the prayer goes up to Jehovah in heaven, he reaches forth his hand from the highest heaven to the uttermost abyss, and plucks his servant from the jaws of death.

4. THE BANDS OF DEATH. LXX, *ὠδίνες θανάτου* (cf. Acts ii. 24), "the pains or pangs of death"; a possible meaning, but not so suitable here to the context, where death is represented as in the next verse, as a hunter (cf. xci. 3). But in Sam. the word employed means "bills," or lit. "breakers," instead of "bands."

5. HELL, lit. "Sheol," "the unseen world," or here = "the grave."

6. TEMPLE, i.e. not the temple, or tabernacle (see v. 7 [8]), on Mount Zion, but the temple in heaven, wherein God especially manifests his glory, and where he is worshipped by the heavenly hosts — a place which is both temple and palace. See xi. 4; xxix. 9.

All the verbs in this verse are imperfect, expressing habit. It might be rendered: "In my distress I would call upon Jehovah, and unto my God would I cry; he would hear my voice out of his temple; and my cry before him would come unto his ears."

On the constant interchange of the preterite with the imperfect or aorist in this Psalm, see more in the Critical Notes.

7-19. The deliverance is now pictured

- 7 Then the earth was moved and did quake,  
 And the foundations of the mountains began to tremble,  
 And were moved to and fro because he was wroth.
- 8 There went up a smoke in his nostrils,  
 And a fire out of his mouth devoured,  
 Coals were kindled by it.
- 9 And he bowed the heavens, and came down,  
 And thick darkness was under his feet.
- 10 And he rode upon a cherub and did fly,  
 And came flying upon the wings of the wind.

as a magnificent theophany. God comes to rescue his servant as he came of old to Sinai, and all nature is moved at his coming. Similar descriptions of the divine manifestation, and of the effects produced by it, occur lxviii. 7, 8 [8, 9]; lxxvii. 14-20 [15-21]; Ex. xix.; Judg. v. 4; Amos ix. 5; Micah i. 3; Hab. iii.; but the image is nowhere so fully carried out as here. David's deliverance was, of course, not really accompanied by such convulsions of nature, by earthquake and fire and tempest, but his deliverance, or rather his manifold deliverances, gathered into one, as he thinks of them, appear to him as marvellous a proof of the divine power, as verily effected by the immediate presence and finger of God, as if he had come down in visible form to accomplish them.

The image is carefully sustained throughout. First, we have the earthquake, and then, as prelude to the storm and as herald of God's wrath, the blaze of the lightning (ver. 7, 8). Next, the thick gathering of clouds, which seem to touch and envelop the earth; the wind, and the darkness, which shrouds Jehovah riding on the cherubim (9-11). Lastly, the full outburst of the storm, the clouds parting before the presence and glory of Jehovah, and pouring upon the earth the burden with which they were heavy—the thunder, and the lightning, and the hail,—the weapons of Jehovah by which, on the one hand, he discomfits his enemies, and, on the other, lays bare the depths of the sea, and the

very foundations of the world, that he may save his servant who trusts in him (12-16).

The image with which the description opened in verse 4, of a sinking, drowning man, is resumed in verse 16, and thus completes the whole. In verses 17-19 the figure is dropped, and the language falls into a lower key.

7. The earthquake. In Sam., instead of foundations of the mountains, "foundations of heaven," by which probably the mountains are meant, which elsewhere are compared to pillars which bear up the heaven (Job xxvi. 11).

8. The swift approach of the storm is vividly described. The *smoke* and the *fire* are symbols of the divine wrath before which all creation must tremble (see ver. 7); here they are the clouds and the lightning of the storm, probably as seen about the mountain summits and in the distance.

IN HIS NOSTRILS. Some have taken offence at the apparent coarseness of the figure, and would therefore render, "in his anger." But the other is more in accordance with the parallelism, "out of his mouth," in the next clause, and may be defended by "the blasting of the breath of thy nostrils," verse 15. Cf. Deut xxix. 19 [E. V. 20]: "The anger of Jehovah. . . shall smoke against that man."

9. HE BOWED THE HEAVENS, which, with their dark masses of low-hanging clouds, seemed almost to touch the earth. Comp. xlv. 5 and Isa. lxiii. 9.

10. AND HE RODE. In the midst of

- 11 He made<sup>d</sup> darkness his secret place, his pavilion round  
about him,  
Dark gloom of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
- 12 At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds  
passed,<sup>e</sup>—  
Hailstones and coals of fire.
- 13 Jehovah also thundered in the heavens,  
And the highest gave his voice,—  
Hailstones and coals of fire.
- 14 And he sent forth his arrows, and scattered them,  
And lightnings innumerable,<sup>f</sup> and discomfited them.
- 15 Then the channels of water were seen,  
And the foundations of the world were discovered,  
At thy rebuke, O Jehovah,  
At the blasting of the breath of thy nostrils.
- 16 He sent from above ; he took me,  
He drew me out of many waters,
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
And from them that hated me ; for they were too strong  
for me.

the storm, though hidden, is Jehovah himself. The wrath of the elements is no blind power, but is guided and controlled by him.

UPON A CHERUB ; or, perhaps, rather a collective noun, and so used for the plural. The cherubim are, as it were, the living chariot of Jehovah, and in their form, being compounded of a man, a bull, a lion, and an eagle (see Ezek. i. and x.), seem to symbolize the powers of nature. As to the etymology of the word "cherub," we are still quite in the dark. It remains what Bähr calls it, a *crux interpretum*. But there can be little doubt that the cherubim—the *living* creatures of Ezekiel—were emphatically the representatives of the life of the creature, and that in its most perfect form. The four animals of which the cherub is composed belong to the highest class of organized beings, so that the old Jewish proverb says : "Four things are

chiefest in the world. The lion among beasts, the bull among cattle, the eagle among birds, and man among all (creatures) ; but God is the Most High over all." See Bähr, *Symbol. d. Mos. Cult.* i. pp. 311, 340, etc. ; Herder, *Geist d. Heb. Poes.* i. 1, 6, etc. There is evidently a connection between this and the heathen symbols, such, for instance, as they appear on the Assyrian monuments. Compare, too, the description in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, of the approach of Oceanus, who comes *τὸν πτερυγῶκῃ τόνδ' οἰωνὸν γνώμῃ στομίων ἄτερ εὐθύνων*.

12. AT THE BRIGHTNESS, etc., i.e. the reflection of his glory, which seems to pierce and part the clouds, which then discharge the hail, the lightning, and the thunder. The repetition of the words, "hailstones and coals of fire," adds much to the force of the description : "Hail is rare in Palestine ; but often the more terrible and destructive when it does fall.

- 18 They came upon me in the day of my calamity,  
But Jehovah was my stay.
- 19 And he brought me forth into a large place,  
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 20 Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness,  
According to the cleanness of my hands did he recompense me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of Jehovah,  
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 22 For all his judgments are before me,  
And his statutes I do not put away from me.
- 23 I have also been perfect with him,  
And have kept myself from my iniquity.
- 24 Therefore Jehovah recompensed me according to my  
righteousness ;  
According to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.
- 25 With the good thou wilt show thyself good,  
With a perfect man thou wilt show thyself perfect,

Comp. Job xxxviii. 22 ; Josh. x. 11." — *Ewald*.

20-30. Next follows the reason for this deliverance ; the first hint of which had already been given in the preceding verse in the words, "because he delighted in me." God deals with men according as he sees their heart to be towards him. Those who walk before him in simplicity and uprightness of heart may expect his succor. And David here, as in the last Psalm, asserts not his freedom from sin, but the consciousness of his own integrity. Some, indeed, have seen in the language a too boastful spirit, and therefore would refer this Psalm, as well as the last, to the time before David's fall. Bunsen even thinks that the self-righteous feeling here betrayed laid him open to temptation, and was the first step in his departure from God. But such a notion has no support from the general tenor of the Psalm, which everywhere breathes a spirit of confidence and trust in God, as far removed as possible from the spirit

of self-righteousness. The words are, in truth, words of childlike, open-hearted simplicity, not of arrogant boastfulness. Some allowance, too, must perhaps be made for the fact that under the old covenant the knowledge of sin was more superficial than it is under the new. Yet St. Paul does not hesitate to say : "I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day" ; and a man may call himself a miserable sinner, and yet be more of a Pharisee than one who asserts his own righteousness. [It may, however, be fairly doubted whether David would have used such language as this after his fall ; and although the Psalm is placed in 2 Sam. at the end of David's history, it does not follow that it was *written* at the close of his life. The special mention of Saul in the inscription would rather favor an earlier time, perhaps the "rest" mentioned in 2 Sam. vii. 1.]

23. The language seems very strong, but is really to be explained (by a reference



- 26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure,  
 And with the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward.
- 27 For THOU savest the afflicted people,  
 And bringest down high looks.
- 28 For THOU givest light to my lamp,  
 Jehovah my God maketh my darkness to be bright.
- 29 For by thee I can rush against<sup>s</sup> a troop;  
 And by my God I can leap over a wall.
- 30 As for God — his way is perfect;  
 The word of Jehovah is tried;  
 He is a shield to all who find refuge in him.
- 31 For who is God but Jehovah,  
 And who is a rock save our God?

to the preceding verse) of the desire and intention of the heart, and the earnest endeavor to avoid all known sin. Compare with this, David's testimony concerning himself, 1 Sam. xxvi. 23, 24; the testimony of God, 1 Kings xiv. 8; and the testimony of the history, 1 Kings xv. 5.

26. **THOU WILT SHOW THYSELF FROWARD.** The expression seems rough and harsh, but is no doubt designedly employed in contrast with what goes before. The meaning is, him who is perverse God gives up to follow his own perverse way till it brings him to destruction. (See lxxxii. 12 [13], and Rom i. 28.) It is also, of course, true, that to the perverse heart God himself appears perverse. The wicked man thinks that God is "altogether such an one as himself;" but this idea is not so prominent here as the other.

The Chaldee paraphrase gives Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as examples of "the good" or "pious," the "perfect," and "the pure," respectively; and Pharaoh and the Egyptians as "the perverse," "whom, because they imagined evil devices against thy people, thou didst confound in their devices."

28. **MY LAMP.** Still more forcibly in Sam., "Thou, O Jehovah, art my

lamp." The lamp lighted in the house is the image at once of *prosperity* and *continuance* of life and happiness. See cxxxii. 17, and of the house of David, 1 Kings xi. 36; xv. 4; 2 Kings viii. 19. on the other hand, the extinction of the royal race is compared to the quenching of the lamp, 2 Sam. xxi. 17.

29. **FOR.** Co-ordinate with the "for" in the two previous verses.

30. **TRIED,** i.e. like metal purified in the fire; in God's promise there is no admixture of alloy; see xii. 6 [7].

31-45. For this, the third principal division of the Psalm, the way has already been prepared in ver. 28-30, as descriptive both of what God is and of the help which he had vouchsafed to his servant. David now dwells in a strain of triumph on the victories and successes which God had given him. We see, therefore, how Strophes I. and III. are connected with Strophe II. The central thought is the relation in which David stands to God. Before the holy God he has walked in his integrity (ver. 20-27); and therefore, on the one hand, God delivered him from his peril (4-19), and on the other, made him victorious over all enemies (31-45).

31. The reference is to Deut. xxxii 4, 15, 18, etc.

- 32 The God who girdeth me with strength,  
And maketh my way perfect ;
- 33 Who maketh my feet like hinds' feet,  
And setteth me on my high places ;
- 34 Who traineth my hands for war,  
So that mine arms can bend <sup>h</sup> a bow of brass.
- 35 And thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation,  
And thy right hand hath holden me up,  
And thy graciousness hath made me great.
- 36 Thou hast made room for my footsteps under me,  
That mine ankles have not slipped.
- 37 I pursued mine enemies and overtook them,  
Neither did I turn again, until they were consumed.
- 38 I have smitten them, that they were not able to rise,  
They are fallen under my feet.
- 39 For thou hast girded me with strength to the battle ;  
Thou hast bowed down under me those that rose up  
against me.
- 40 Mine enemies also thou hast made to turn their backs  
before me,  
So that I destroyed them that hate me.
- 41 They cried, — but there was none to save them,—  
Even unto Jehovah, but he answered them not.

32. **MAKETH MY WAY PERFECT.** Correlative to "his way is perfect," ver. 30.

33. **ON MY HIGH PLACES,** i.e. the mountain strongholds which I have seized (as in taking the stronghold of Zion itself). On the occupation of these military positions would depend the possession of the whole country.

34. In the preceding verse the comparison with the hind denoted the extraordinary swiftness which, whether for attack or escape, was considered a great excellence in the warriors of ancient times. Here, the bending of a bow of brass (or bronze, rather, χαλκός, which seems to have been tempered and rendered pliable, like steel with us) indicates his great strength (comp. Job xx. 24).

In Homer, Ulysses leaves behind him at Ithaca a bow which no one but himself could bend.

35. Yet it is not the bow of brass which has been David's protection ; but Jehovah's shield covered him ; Jehovah's right hand held him up ; Jehovah's wonderful condescension (by which he was taken from the sheepfolds to be king) made him great ; Jehovah made room for him to stand, and subdued those that rose up against him.

**THY GRACIOUSNESS,** lit. "meekness," "lowliness," a very remarkable word as applied to God, and just one of those links connecting the Divine with the human, which in the Old Testament so strikingly foreshadow an incarnation.

- 42 And I beat them small as the dust before the wind,  
     Like the mire of the streets I emptied them out.
- 43 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people ;  
     Thou hast made me head over the nations :  
     A people that I know not, serve me.
- 44 At the hearing of the ear, they obeyed me,<sup>i</sup>  
     The sons of the alien came crouching unto me.
- 45 The sons of the alien faded away,  
     They came trembling out of their strongholds.
- 46 Jehovah liveth, and blessed is my Rock,  
     And exalted the God of my salvation ;
- 47 (Even) the God who giveth me vengeance,  
     And (who) subdued peoples under me.
- 48 Thou art he that deliverest me from mine enemies ;  
     Yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise against me ;  
     Thou hast delivered me from men of violence.

[It is easy to exclaim against anthropomorphisms, but they speak to the heart, which is never touched by cold philosophic abstractions.]

41. The cry extorted in terror, and not coming from an upright heart (ver. 24, etc.), is not heard. See the opposite, ver. 6.

44. AT THE HEARING OF THE EAR, i.e. even at a distance, without seeing me, as soon as they heard my command. (See Job xlii. 5.)

CAME CROUCHING; lit. "lied unto me," so descriptive of the *abject, crouching, fawning* submission of the Oriental. Cf. lxvi. 3 (where see note), lxxxi. 15 [16], "feigned submission."

45. FADED AWAY, i.e. before the victorious might of David, like plants scorched and shrivelled before the hot blast of the simoom (Isa. xl. 7).

CAME TREMBLING (lit. trembled out of, etc.), i.e. in order to give in their submission, and to implore the clemency and protection of the conqueror (Micah vii. 17). The verbs in this and the preceding verse *may* be rendered as *futures*, as in the E.V., and then they will ex-

press David's sure hope, based upon the past, of the final subjugation of all his enemies.

46-50. The hymn now concludes with the praise of Jehovah, who had done so great things for David and for his seed. And as Jehovah has not only placed him on the throne of Jerusalem, but has given him dominion over foreign nations, he will proclaim amongst these also the name and the praises of his God. Here we have the first utterance of a hope, which in later times became clear and distinct, that the heathen should learn to fear and worship Jehovah. The Chald. paraphrast on ver. 31 [32] gives a remarkable prominence to this expectation. After applying ver. 27, 28 [28, 29] to the deliverance of Israel from captivity ("Thou wilt light the lamp of Israel which has been put out in captivity," etc.), he thus expands ver. 31 [32]: Because of the wonder and the redemption which thou wilt accomplish for thine anointed, and for the remnant of thy people which shall be left, all peoples, nations, and tongues shall praise (thee), and shall say, "There

49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah, among  
the nations ;

And to thy name will I sing praises :

50 Who giveth great deliverance to his king ;

And showeth loving-kindness to his anointed, —

To David and his seed for evermore.

is no God but Jehovah ; for there is none but thou only ” ; and thy people shall say, “ There is none strong save our God.”

49. St. Paul quotes this verse (Rom. xv. 9), as well as Deut. xxxii. 43, and Ps. cxvii. 1, as proof that the salvation of Christ belonged, in the purpose of God, to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The Psalm therefore looks beyond David. David and David’s rule over the nations are but a type and image of Christ, and of that spiritual kingdom which he came to establish. “ Nec enim dubium est,”

says Luther, “ Davidis bella et victorias Christi passionem et resurrectionem figurasse.” At the same time, he admits that it is very doubtful how far the Psalm applies to Christ, and how far to David, “ Nec ipse hactenus certus factus sum ultra intelligentia sit germana et propria ut citra periculum non queam hic versari.” It would be well if the modesty of this great man were found in those who, having neither his faith nor his learning, pronounce their confident decisions on such questions.

<sup>a</sup> מְהִלָּל. This word, by most of the older translators, is taken in an active sense, as if they read מְהִלָּל. The LXX, αἰνῶν ἐπικαλέσομαι, κ.τ.λ. Vulg. *Laudans* ; Chald., “ In a hymn of praise do I utter my prayer.” The Syr. joins it as an epithet to מְשֻׁבָּב in the previous verse, “ my glorious refuge.” Strictly it can only mean “ who is praised.” So Jerome, *Laudatum invocabo Dominum*. But it may also mean “ worthy to be praised,” “ glorious,” as the one great object of praise, after the analogy of מְהִלָּל, מְהִלָּל. Ewald takes it as a predicate : “ Worthy to be praised is Jehovah, do I cry.”

<sup>b</sup> בְּלִיָּעַל, “ Belial ” ; lit. “ worthlessness ” (fr. רָעַל and בָּלִי, fut. of עָלָה, in the sense of the cogn. root, Hiph. רוּעִיל, “ to profit, to be of service ”). Here used, perhaps, of *physical* rather than of moral evil, from the parallelism with Death and Sheol. The older interpreters generally take it in the moral sense = “ wickedness.” So the LXX, χείμαρροι ἀνομίας, as a designation of David’s enemies, the abstract being put for the concrete. Finally, many give the word a personal meaning, and understand by it the evil one, Satan (as Βελιάρ, 2 Cor. vi. 15). So Jerome, *torrentes diaboli*, a meaning, however, which is certainly later than the Old Testament. At any rate, *physical* evil can hardly be excluded here. Comp. xli. 9 ; Nahum i. 11. The English version never renders the word as a proper name, except in the historical books, in the phrases “ sons of Belial,” “ daughter of Belial ” ; everywhere



else the word is translated. The LXX never render it as a proper name.

יִרְעֵתִי, “began to terrify,” or “were terrifying me.” The verb must refer to the past, because of the pret. אֶפְסִינִי, going before. But the constant interchange of the preterites and futures (so called) in this Psalm is remarkable, and in many cases very perplexing. The context sometimes determines, as here, that the fut. must be taken as an imperf. or aorist, the time being, in fact, conditioned by the preterite preceding. So in ver. 7 (Heb.) אֶתְרָא must mean “I was wont to cry,” ... וְשָׁמַע, “he would ever hear,” etc. (text in Sam. has וְשָׁמַע). And then the *consequence* of this hearing is marked by the ו consec. at the beginning of ver. 8, וַתִּשְׁמַע. Again, וְרָגַז must, of necessity, refer to the same time as the preceding verbs with the ו consec. Precisely in the same way in ver. 14 we have וַיִּרְעֵם, followed by וַיִּתֵּן, where this last may be rendered “kept giving,” as referring to the *repeated* crash of the thunders. The continued use of the futures, however, in ver. 17, 18, 19, is more noticeable. They do not alternate here, as in the previous instances, with preterites, or futures with ו consec. Yet they can only refer to past time, and then not to repeated action, but to *the* deliverance which was the result of the theophany. In verses 26–29 (in the E. V. 25–28) the futures are strict aorists, denoting habit. In ver. 30, they may either be futures proper, or — which seems to me better — have a sort of potential meaning.

In verses 38, 39, 43, 44–46, there is again considerable doubt as to the proper rendering of the futures. Most of the old versions here give the strict *future* meaning. So the Chald., except in ver. 43. The LXX in 38, 39, and 43, 44. Jerome in 37, 38, and 42–46. The Syr. in the whole passage, 38–46, even where the fut. with ו consec. occurs in ver. 40, and the pret. in ver. 41. The English version adopts the fut. only in the last member of ver. 44, and in ver. 45, 46 (in the E. V. 43–45). Hupfeld also contends for the *future*, beginning at ver. 38. He thinks that we have not mere narration, but a general expression of confidence for all future time, based upon, and flowing out of, the deliverance already accomplished. (This is, no doubt, somewhat confirmed by the fact, that in 2 Sam. we have the optat. form, אֶרְדָּפָה, in the parallel passage). Others, as Ewald, Hengstenberg, etc., take the futures here as *presents*. I incline, however, (with Maurer) to think that the reference of the verbs is still to the past, and I would explain them as aorists, of repeated past action, though it is quite possible that David, here transferring himself into the past, might use

these futures as proper futures, *speaking from the past*, and not from the present.

<sup>d</sup> רָשָׁה. In 2 Sam. רָשָׁה, the historic tense, which seems almost necessary. רָשָׁה may, however, stand as introducing a subordinate explanatory clause — “whilst he made,” etc.

<sup>e</sup> This has been differently interpreted: (1) “At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds passed away — or, separated themselves — (so that) hail and coals of fire (issued from them)” ; (2) ... “His clouds went forth, viz. hail and coals of fire.” So Vat., “e splendido conspectu ejus *egrediuntur* nubes in quibus generantur fulmina,” etc.; (3) “Out of the brightness before him, there passed through his clouds hailstones,” etc., i.e. the lightning coming from the brightness of God’s presence, (and accompanied by hail,) burst through the clouds. Hupfeld decides for (3), as the only one consistent with grammar. It must be admitted that in (1) the ellipsis is somewhat harsh, yet not more so, perhaps, than is consistent with the boldness of lyric poetry, and the *sense* is certainly the most satisfactory. In (2) the apposition is weak, and it is not natural to speak of the clouds as coming forth from the brightness before Jehovah.

<sup>f</sup> רָב. Many (after Kimchi) render, “he shot out,” referring to Gen. xlix. 23. The LXX, ἐπλήθυνε; Syr., ܠܝܬܝܢܝܐ; Jerome, *multiplicavit*. It may, however, be an adverb, “in abundance,” subjoined to the noun instead of an adj., as נֶעֱשֶׂה commonly is. So apparently the Chald., which expresses it by an adj., וברקין סגיאין.

<sup>g</sup> אָרַץ. This has been taken by Ewald and others as a fut. from רָצַץ (instead of אָרַץ), as in Isa. xlii. 4; Eccl. xii. 6. But it is better to take it as fut. of רָיַץ (in 2 Sam. we have the fuller form). The verb is used of hostile attack, lix. 5; Joel ii. 7; and with prep. אֶל and בָּל, Job xv. 26; xvi. 14; Dan. viii. 6. Here with the acc., after the analogy of verbs of motion. Cf. Job vi. 4 with iii. 25 and xv. 21.

<sup>h</sup> נִחְתָּה, not (as Kimchi) Niph. of דָּחָה, “is broken,” but Piel of נָחַת, “to press down, and so to bend,” fem. sing. with plur. subj., as Gen. xlix. 22; Joel i. 20; Zech. vi. 14.

<sup>i</sup> וַשְׁמָעוּ. The Niph. (instead of the Kal, which is more usual) must = Hithp. *Showed themselves obedient*, as Dan. vi. 27. Cf. for the same use of the Niph. Ex. xiv. 4; Num. xx. 13; Isa. v. 16.

A comparison of the two texts leads to the conclusion that in almost every instance where they differ that of 2 Sam. is inferior to the other. In two instances only does it preserve readings of any importance: (1) הַשָּׁרֵת, 2 Sam. xxii. 12 (instead of הַשֶּׁבֶת in the Psalm), a ἄπ. λεγ. “a gathering, collection,” of waters; the root is not found in Heb., but

there is a kindred root in Arab. **حش**, “to collect” (comp. also Heb. **קטר**); and (2) in ver. 16 **אֶפְיֹרִים**, “channels of the sea,” is perhaps the original expression. In ver. 5 **מְשֻׁבֵּרִי** (text of Sam.) seems preferable, as avoiding the repetition of **הִבְלִי**; and so **מִים** is used with the same verb **אֶפְפֹּנִי**, “the waters took hold on me,” Jonah ii. 6. In many cases the variations seem to have arisen from the license of popular expressions creeping into the text. In ver. 27 the forms **הַתִּבְרִי** and **הַתִּפְלִי** are completely in defiance of all grammar.

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## PSALM XIX.

THIS Psalm consists of two distinct parts, in which are contrasted God's revelation of himself in nature and his revelation of himself in his word. It speaks first of his glory as seen in the heavens, and then of his glory as manifested in his law.

It may have been written, perhaps, in the first flush of an Eastern sunrise, when the sun was seen “going forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a mighty man to run his course.” The song breathes all the life and freshness, all the gladness and glory of the morning. The devout singer looks out, first, on the works of God's fingers, and sees all creation bearing its constant, though silent testimony to its Maker; and then he turns himself with a feeling of deep satisfaction to that yet clearer and better witness concerning him to be found in the inspired Scriptures. Thus he begins the day; thus he prepares himself for the duties that await him, for the temptations that may assail, and the sorrows that may gather as a cloud about him. He has made trial of the preciousness of that word. He knows its deep, hallowing, soul-sustaining power. He knows that it is full of life and healing. But he knows, also, that it is a word that searches and tries the heart, that reveals the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man; and therefore he bows himself in prayer, saying, “As for errors—who can understand them? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

The difference of style observable between the two parts of the Psalm, and the abruptness of the transition from one part to the other, have led some critics to the conclusion that these did not originally constitute one poem. Thus Ewald speaks of the former half as a beautiful torso—a splendid, but unfinished, fragment of the time of David, to which some later bard subjoined the praise of the law. But

it is not absolutely necessary to adopt such a supposition. No doubt there is a very considerable difference between the sustained lyric movement of verses 1-6, and the regular didactic rhythm of the latter half of the Psalm. But it may fairly be argued that the nature of the subject influenced the change in style. The apparent suddenness of transition, too, though it cannot be denied, may not only be accounted for by the nature of lyric poetry, but was probably the result of design, in order to give more force to the contrast. That such *is* the effect, it is impossible not to feel.

This is one of the Psalms appointed by the church to be read in her service on the festival of the nativity. But the selection surely does not rest on any of those merely external and superficial points of connection which are commonly supposed to have guided it. Thus, for instance, it has been said that the Psalm speaks of the glory of the natural sun as seen in the heavens, and the church celebrates on that day the rising of "the Sun of Righteousness" upon the earth. Or, again, St. Paul illustrates the diffusion of the gospel throughout the world by words borrowed from the Psalm (Rom. x. 18), and hence it may be naturally associated with the incarnation, which led to that diffusion. But it is obvious that, if this quotation influenced the selection, the Psalm would far more appropriately have been appointed for Ascension Day or Whitsunday.<sup>1</sup>

No, it is with a far profounder wisdom that the church puts this Psalm into our lips on Christmas Day. What is the great truth which the church brings before us so prominently on that day? Not only the incarnation, but the truth that in the incarnate Jesus we have the perfect revelation of God. It is the Word who was with God and was God, who being in the bosom of the Father declared the Father, who as on that day became flesh. And what does the Psalm speak of, but two other imperfect and partial and preparatory revelations of God, — his revelation in nature and his revelation in his written word? Thus we are led, step by step, from the first and lowest revelation in the natural world to the revelation in the written word, and then, beyond and above these, to the one great, perfect, all-embracing, all-completing revelation in his Son. The Gospel and Epistle for the day give the true explanation of the choice of this Psalm. It begins, and they finish, the cycle of divine revelation to man.

The strophical arrangement of the Psalm is as follows :

<sup>1</sup> "In the Latin Church this Psalm is appointed for use also on the festivals of the Ascension and of Trinity Sunday ; so likewise it was in the Sarum Use ; and in the Gregorian Use it is appointed for the Annunciation." — *Wordsworth*.



## I. The glory of God in creation (ver. 1-6).

(1) The witness of the heavens to God as their Creator (ver. 1).

(2) The nature of the witness as continuous (ver. 2), though not audible (ver. 3); and universal (ver. 4 *a, b*).

(3) The witness especially of the sun, who, as the most glorious of the heavenly bodies ("dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum") is chiefest herald of God's praise (ver. 4c-6).

## II. The glory of God in his word (ver. 7-14).

(1) The excellence and power (ver. 7-9), and the exceeding preciousness (ver. 10, 11), of the law of Jehovah.

(2) The prayer of the servant of Jehovah, in the light of that law, to be kept from unconscious errors, as well as from open transgressions (ver. 12, 13), from sins of the lip, and sins of the heart (ver. 14).

[For the Precentor. (A Psalm) of David.]

## I. 1 THE heavens are telling the glory of God ;

And the work of his hands doth the firmament declare.

## 2 Day unto day poureth forth speech :

And night unto night revealeth knowledge.

## 3 There is no speech, and there are no words,

Their voice is not heard :<sup>a</sup>

1. The Psalm opens with the impression produced on the poet's mind by the magnificence and the order of creation. Of the two clauses of this verse, the first states the *fact* that the heavens publish God's glory; the second explains *how* this is done; viz. by testifying that he has made them. Comp. viii. 1 [2], 3 [4]; Rom. i. 20; Acts xiv. 17. This is the true meaning of the heavens and their pomp. That splendor which fills their arch, that beauty which so attracts the eye, that everlasting order by which day and night follow in sweet vicissitude—these things are not the offspring of chance; they are not the evolution of some blind spirit enchained within the mass which it vivifies; much less are they the work of some evil power whose kingdom and whose triumph are to be seen in the material universe. *God* created them, and they show forth *his* glory. *His* fingers fashioned them. He

clothed them with light as with a garment, and put the sun in the midst of them to show forth his praise.

2. To the personification of the heavens succeeds that of day and night. The words may either be rendered as in the text, or "one day after another," "day after day, night after night," etc. This verse expresses not so much the progressive character, as the never-failing continuance of the testimony. There is no pause, no change in the stately procession; none of them thrusts or breaks his ranks; forever they abide the same.

3. **THEIR VOICE IS NOT HEARD**; lit. "is inaudible." This seems to be a kind of correction or explanation of the bold figure which had ascribed language to the heavens. They have a language, but not one that can be classed with any of the dialects of earth. They have a voice, but one that speaks not to the ear, but to the devout and understanding

- 4 Through the whole earth hath their line<sup>b</sup> gone forth,  
 And their words unto the end of the world.  
 For the sun hath he set a tabernacle in them ;
- 5 And he is like a bridegroom that goeth forth out of his  
 chamber ;  
 He rejoiceth as a mighty man to run (his) course.
- 6 From (one) end of the heaven is his going forth,  
 And his circuit as far as the (other) ends thereof,  
 Neither is anything hid from his heat.

heart. The sense is very well expressed in the well-known paraphrase of Addison:  
 "What though in solemn silence all

Move round this dark, terrestrial ball,

In *reason's ear* they all rejoice,

And utter forth a glorious voice," etc.

4. Once more, this testimony is not only full and clear and unbroken, it is universal. Everywhere the heavens span and compass the earth, and everywhere they preach the same divine sermon. If no fire of love to God burned in any heart of man, still he would not have left himself without a witness in yon blue vault and those shining orbs. St. Paul (Rom. x. 18) quotes the former part of this verse in illustration of the progress of the gospel. "Faith," he says, "cometh by hearing," and then asks, "Have they (i.e. the nations at large) not heard"? Yea, rather, so widely has the gospel been preached, that its progress may be described in the words in which the Psalmist tells of God's revelation of himself in nature. The one has now become co-extensive with the other. The *praeconium coelorum* is not more universal than the *praeconium evangelii*. The older interpreters, not perceiving the drift of the apostle's quotation, supposed that his authority compelled them to give an allegorical explanation of the former part of this Psalm, and therefore took the heavens as a figure of the church, and the sun as a figure of the gospel. Luther, too, contrary to his wont, adopts here this strange fancy, instead of adhering to the literal meaning of the text.

IN THEM, i.e. in the heavens, hath God set a tent or pavilion, etc. In like manner a tabernacle or pavilion is ascribed to the sun (Hab. iii. 11). But it is doubtful whether the heavens themselves are the royal pavilion—"tentorium augustale et praetorium . . . sol tanquam rex coelorum," as Venema says (and so also Stier); or whether the sun is supposed to issue from a tent when he rises, and return to it when he sets. The former certainly accords best with the passage in Habakkuk.

5, 6. Nothing can be more striking than the figures in which the freshness and gladness of the young morning, and the strength of the sun's onward march, are described. "The morning light," says Delitzsch, "has in it a freshness and cheerfulness, a renewed youth. Therefore the morning sun is compared to a bridegroom, the desire of whose heart is satisfied, who stands, as it were, at the beginning of a new life, and in whose youthful countenance the joy of the wedding-day still shines."

7. But the singer turns from God's revelation of himself in nature to his revelation of himself in his written word. He turns from that which was the common property of all to that which was the special privilege of the Jew. In accordance with this change of subject is the difference in the use of the divine names. "The word of nature declares to us God (אֱלֹהִים, 'El); the word of scripture, Jehovah (יְהוָה): the one, God's creative might and majesty, the other, his counsel and will."—*Delitzsch*. "For it

7 The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul ;  
The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the  
simple.

is written," says Bacon, "*Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei* ; but it is not written, *Coeli enarrant voluntatem Dei*, but of that it is said, *Ad legem et testimonium, si non fecerint secundum verbum istud*," etc. (Adv. of Learning, Book ii.) The transition to this new subject is, no doubt, somewhat abrupt, but this only renders the contrast the more forcibly striking. There is a quick rebound of the heart as it were from the world of nature, beautiful and glorious as it is, to that which is far more beautiful and more glorious, the word of revelation. But despite the seeming abruptness, there is a point of connection between the two portions of the Psalm. What the sun is in the natural world, that the law is in the spiritual,—the one quickens and cherishes all animal life, nothing being hid from his heat; the other quickens and cherishes the life of the soul.

7-10. It would be difficult to find a more perfect example of Hebrew parallelism. In verses 7, 8, we have in each member of each verse the law of Jehovah described ; first, by means of a simple attribute setting forth its inherent character ; and then subjoined, without a copula, what it is in its effects upon the heart and spirit of men. The second division, too, of each member is constructed in both verses exactly on the same principle ; it consists, that is, of an active participle in the stat. constr. followed by the object of its action. Thus, to "perfect" in one clause, answers "sure" in the next ; to "restoring the soul," "making wise the simple," and so on. In verse 9 the parallelism is no less strictly observed, but it is thrown into a different form, the latter half of each member being now a further predicate of the *nature* of the law considered in *itself*, not in its *effects*. In verse 10 we have not the effects of the law, as before, but its preciousness and sweetness set forth ; and here again there is the most

exact parallelism between the two members of the verse.

7. THE LAW . . . THE TESTIMONY. These are the collective terms embracing the whole body of "statutes," "judgments," etc., afterwards mentioned : "*Totum illud doctrinae corpus*," as Calvin says, "*ex quo constat vera religio et pietas*." This revelation has the name of "testimony" ; as testifying, bearing witness of, God's character both in his good-will towards those who obey him, and in his displeasure against transgressors, especially in the latter sense. It is, as Harless says, "the word of God, testifying of himself, and affirming what he is, in opposition to the apostasy of man." (*Ethik*, § 14, Anm.) See Deut. xxxi 26, 27. Hence the force of its connection with the ark and the mercy-seat (כפרת), Ex. xxv. 16 ; xxvi. 34 ; Lev. xvi. 13 ; the symbol of God's righteous severity against sin being hidden beneath the symbol of his grace and mercy. With affectionate tenderness the sacred poet lavishes his epithets of admiration upon this word of God. In its nature he declares it to be perfect, sure, right, pure, standing fast forever, the very truth itself, righteous altogether. These epithets mark it as reflecting the holiness of God (pure, righteous, etc.), as being in its nature worthy of all reliance, as that which cannot be set aside or tampered with. It is no leaden rule that may be bent and twisted by the unsteady hand of human caprice to suit its own selfish purposes ; but *the truth*, that we may believe it ; *pure*, that it may lift us out of our sin ; *standing fast forever*, that we may find in it at all times the same unerring guide.

Next we have its marvellous effects declared.

RESTORING THE SOUL ; i.e. it calls it back from its wanderings by reminding it of its ingratitude, by setting before it its high destiny, by bringing it to its true Shepherd and Guardian.

- 8 The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart ;  
The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
- 9 The fear of Jehovah is clean, standing fast forever ;  
The judgments of Jehovah are truth, they are righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold ;  
Sweeter also than honey and the dropping of the honey-comb.
- 11 Moreover thy servant is enlightened by them,  
(And) in keeping of them there is great reward.
- 12 As for errors, — who can perceive (them) ?  
From secret (faults) do thou pronounce me innocent,

MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE. It gives to each one who studies it with *open*, unprejudiced, candid mind, that divine wisdom whereby he attains to salvation. Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 15, "The sacred scriptures which are able to make thee wise (*σοφίσαι*) unto salvation." The purposes for which Scripture is there said to be profitable should be compared with what is said here.

THE SIMPLE ; lit. "the open" (רַחֵם, *patere*, to be open), not here "the foolish," as often in Proverbs, but he who is ready to become a fool, that he may be wise, who has the true child-like spirit (Matt. xi. 25 ; 1 Cor. i. 27), which best fits him to become a disciple in the school of God.

8. RIGHT ; i.e. straight, as opposed to the crooked ways of man.

REJOICING THE HEART, filling it with joy in God, by manifesting him as the portion of the soul, and so lifting it above the joys as well as the sorrows of earth.

ENLIGHTENING THE EYES. According to the expressive Hebrew idiom, it is to the soul what food is to the worn and fainting body. It is what the honey which he found in the wood was to Jonathan, when he returned wearied and

exhausted from the pursuit of his enemies. Cf. cxix. 18 ; Acts xxvi. 18 ; Eph. i. 18.

9. THE FEAR OF JEHOVAH. Another name for the law, but as contemplated not so much in its outward aspect, as in its working on the heart. Not the religious feeling itself is here meant, but the law as intended to evoke and guide that religious feeling, and therefore identified with it : "doctrina quae praescribit quomodo Deum timere oporteat." — *Calvin*.

11. Personal experience of the blessedness of obeying God's law, inasmuch as it brings with it both *enlightenment* and *reward*.

12. But with all this affection for God's word, there is mingled awe and reverence. That word lays a man bare to himself. It judges him ; it shows him what is in him, convinces him how much there is that needs to be purged, how far even one who loves it is from a perfect obedience. It is at once a copy of the will of God, and a mirror of the heart of man. Hence it calls forth the penitent confession, "As for errors, who can understand them" ? and the prayer both to be absolved — "*pronounce me free*" (like the New Testament *δικαιῶν*)



13 Also from presumptuous (sins)<sup>c</sup> keep thy servant back ;

Let them not have dominion over me :

Then shall I be perfect,<sup>d</sup>

And innocent from great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable before thee,

O Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer !

—and to be kept from sin ; first for pardon, and then for sanctification.

ERRORS, sins both of ignorance and infirmity, those which are done unintentionally and unconsciously ; “ For we are entangled in so many nets and snares of Satan, that none of us can perceive the hundredth part of the evils that cleave to him.” — *Calvin*.

SECRET (FAULTS) ; lit. things hidden, i.e. not only from others, but from our own hearts, through inobservance, through a too ready forgetfulness of them when observed, through the habit of self-deception, or even through their being wilfully cherished.

13. PRESUMPTUOUS (SINS). This neuter sense of the word seems required by the context. (See Critical Note.) These are sins done with a high hand ;

see Numb. xv. 27–31. Against these he prays that they may not get the full mastery over him. This completes the climax, which begins with involuntary, and advances to hidden, presumptuous, and at length ruling, sins, which leave a man their hopeless slave.

14. BE ACCEPTABLE, the usual formula applied to God's acceptance of sacrifices offered to him (Lev. i. 3, 4, etc.). Prayer to God is the sacrifice of the heart and of the lips. Comp. Hos. xiv. 2. “ So will we offer our lips as calves.”

The name of Jehovah is repeated for the seventh time. The epithets “ my Rock,” “ my Redeemer,” have here a peculiar force. For he is my strength in keeping the law ; my Redeemer as delivering me from the guilt and the power of sin.

\* The rendering given in the text is that of Hengstenberg and Hupfeld. The second clause would be more literally rendered, “ their voice is an inaudible one.” Delitzsch objects to this that such a meaning would require a *Vau* adversative, = “ but,” or “ but yet,” in the next verse, and that the sense moreover is flat, and in contradiction to what had been said before ; he accordingly renders (following Vitranga) : “ It is not a speech, and it is not words, whose voice (sound) is inaudible ; ” i.e. the utterance of the heavens is in discourse that all can catch, in words that all can understand, one that is *φανερόν*, Rom. i. 19. But would not this require *לֹא* instead of *וְאֵין* ?

The rendering of our own version, which is that of Luther, Calvin, and others : “ There is no speech or language, but their voice is heard among them ” (i.e. all nations hear their tidings), must be rejected ; first, because *וְאֵין* does not mean “ a language,” but only “ speech, utterance,” as in ver. 2 ; it must have been *לִשׁוֹן* or *שִׁפְחָה* (Gen. xi. 1) ; and next, because *בְּלִי* is here construed with a participle, not with a

finite verb. "Without their voice being heard," must have been בְּלִי נִשְׁמָע (Gen. xxxi. 20) or בְּלִי יִשְׁמָע (Job xli. 18; Hos. viii. 7). With the participle, בְּלִי has the same effect as the Greek *a privat*. See 2 Sam. xii. 1.

<sup>b</sup> בַּי, prop. "a line, plummet-line" (as used in building, Zech. i. 16, or in pulling down, Isa. xxxiv. 11, al.), also "a measuring-line" (for marking out the extent of a city, Jer. xxxi. 39, where it is also used with יִצָּא, Ezek. xlvii. 3). Hence, as the heaven seems to measure and mark out the earth (whence the term horizon, or boundary), here "their line, or boundary," Others interpret "their writing, or characters," as in Isa. xxviii. 10, "line upon line." Others, again, "their sound." So LXX, φθόγγος; cf. Rom. x. 18; Symm., ἦχος; Jerome and Vulg., *sonus*. Others, again, connect it with the Arab., قَوِي, and render "*intensio*," sc. vocis, like τόπος fr. τέλω. The last member of the verse, in which the sun is introduced, more naturally begins a new strophe. The suffixes "their," "in them," etc., all refer to the heavens," ver. 2.

<sup>c</sup> זָרִים. In form this word no doubt is masc., and would naturally be explained after the analogy of גָּיַר, גִּלְיָן, etc., "proud, bold transgressors;" but this sense is quite at variance with the context. Hence the neuter sense is preferabl. Comp. מַשִּׁים, ci. 3; Hos. v. 2. So Kimchi and Rashi explain it by זָרוּנוֹת, and the Rabb. use of בְּזָרוֹן, as opposed to בְּשִׁנְיָה, points the same way. Aq. or Symm. (see Field's Hlex.) τὰ ὑπερήφανα; Mich., *prohaeretica peccata*; Calvin, *superbiae*. So also amongst more modern commentators, Stier and Delitzsch.

<sup>d</sup> אֵי־הֵם. Fut. Kal for אֵהֵם, the ה having been incorrectly inserted (as a *scriptio plena*), from תָּהֵם, like תִּי־נִשָּׂא, Ex. xxv. 31.

## PSALM XX.

THIS is evidently a liturgical Psalm, and was intended originally, it would seem, to be sung on behalf of a king who was about to go forth to war against his enemies. The structure of the Psalm, and the change from the plural to the singular, render it probable that it was chanted in alternate measure by the congregation and the priest or Levite who led the choir. As the king stands within the sanctuary offering his sacrifice, the whole assembled crowd of worshippers in the spacious courts lift up their voices in the prayer that Jehovah would

graciously accept those sacrifices, and send him help and victory in the battle.

For what special occasion the Psalm was first composed, it is of course now quite impossible to say. Some, following the Syriac translator, would refer it to the time of David's war with the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. x.) ; but obviously it would apply to other circumstances equally well. From the way in which the king is spoken of in the third person, the Rabbinical and other later commentators have concluded that the Psalm was not written by David himself, but by some other poet in his honor. Calvin, however, argues that there is no absurdity in supposing David to be the author, provided we recollect that he is here speaking in his prophetic character, and instructing the church how to pray for the safety of that kingdom which God has set up.

The Psalm has no doubt a prophetic aspect, from the fact that the Jewish king was, by virtue of his office, a type of Christ. Luther, indeed, observes: "This Psalm almost all expound of Christ. But such an exposition appears to me to be too far-fetched to be called literal (*remotior quam ut literalis dici possit*). Accordingly, in its more simple and evident meaning, I think it to be a kind of general litany for magistrates and those who are placed in high office, for whom the apostle also (1 Tim. ii.) bids us first of all pray, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." Calvin, however, is right in saying that inasmuch as this kingdom differed from all other kingdoms, because God had determined to govern and defend his people by the hand of David and of his seed, therefore we ought to recognize, under the type of the temporal kingdom, that better rule on which the joy and happiness of the church depend.

The Psalm consists of three parts:

I. The prayer of the congregation. This was probably chanted by the Levites, whilst the smoke of the sacrifices ascended towards heaven (ver. 1-5).

II. Either the king himself, strengthened and encouraged by the prayer of the congregation, or more probably one of the Levites, now takes up the strain, gives utterance to his faith in God, and already in spirit sees his enemies, great and powerful as they were, broken and overthrown (ver. 6-8).

III. The congregation once more respond, and taking up the words of the king or the Levite (ver. 6), change them into a prayer for the king, adding also a petition that their prayer may be heard (ver. 9).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David].

*The congregation led by the Levites.*

- 1 JEHOVAH answer thee in the day of distress,  
The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.
- 2 Send thee help from the sanctuary,  
And uphold thee out of Zion!
- 3 Remember all thine offerings;  
And graciously accept<sup>a</sup> thy burnt sacrifice. [Selah.]
- 4 Give thee according to thy heart's desire,  
And fulfil all thy counsel!
- 5 So will we shout for joy because of thy salvation,  
And in the name of our God will we wave our banners.<sup>b</sup>  
Jehovah fulfil all thy petitions.

Ver. 1-4. The futures are all optative, the prayers and wishes of the people accompanying the offering of the sacrifice.

1. THE NAME OF THE GOD OF JACOB (see above, Ps. v. 11 [12]). Alschech sees a reference to Gen. xxxv. 3, where Jacob says: "I will make there (at Bethel) an altar unto God, who *answered me in the day of my distress*, and was with me in the way which I went."

DEFEND THEE; lit. "set thee up on high," i.e. as in a fortress where no enemy can do thee harm, or on a rock at the foot of which the waves fret and dash themselves in impotent fury.

3. The king offers, as was usual, before going into battle (1 Sam. xiii. 19, etc.), his whole burnt-sacrifices (עֹלֹת), together with the bloodless offering (מִנְחָה) of fine flour, mixed with oil and frankincense. To this last the verb "remember" is peculiarly applicable. For the priest was to take a handful of it, and burn it as a "memorial" (זִכָּרֹה, μνημόσυνον, cf. Acts x. 4) upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord (Lev. ii. 2).

GRACIOUSLY ACCEPT; lit. "make fat" (xxiii. 5), but here in a declarative sense, "regard as fat," and so "receive as fat," i.e. as worthy to be offered, the

fattest of the flock being chosen for sacrifice.

Very excellent are Luther's remarks here, and capable of wide application. After observing that the sacrifices of the old law are done away in Christ, he continues, "Notwithstanding, at the present day others, as well as David, may use this Psalm in prayer; for as the person, the circumstances, the time, and place are all different in the new law, so likewise is the sacrifice; but one faith and one spirit abide through all ages, and amid all diversities of places, works, persons. The external varies; the internal remains ever the same."—*Operat. in Ps. xix.* [xx.]

4. THY COUNSEL; i.e. all thy plans and measures in the war.

5. The form of the verb here (with ה paragog.) marks the conclusion following from, the resolve based upon, what goes before, yet still as a prayer or wish. Rather "so *may* we shout for joy" (i.e. do thou grant this as the result) than "so *will* we," etc.

THY SALVATION. This *may* mean "the help and victory vouchsafed by God to the king," as in xxi. 5; but Thrupp observes: "The almost instinctive dependence of the Israelites upon



*The King or a Levite.*

- 6 Now know I that Jehovah saveth his anointed;  
 He will answer him from his holy heaven  
 With the strength of the salvation of his right hand.
- 7 Some of chariots and some of horses,  
 But *we* will make mention of the name of Jehovah our  
 God.
- 8 *They* have bowed down and fallen  
 But *we* have risen and stood upright.

their king, as the man who should save them (cf. 1 Sam. x. 27), fully justifies us in interpreting the expression *thy salvation*, verse 5, in its most natural sense, not as the salvation bestowed by God upon the king, but as that wrought by the king for his people."

6. The second division of the Psalm. The offering of the sacrifices had, we may suppose, been concluded; and now, after a pause of some duration, a single voice (probably of one of the Levites) is heard, declaring that the sacrifice has been graciously received, and thence drawing an augury of success.

The hope suddenly changes into certainty, *now know I*, that Jehovah *hath* saved, *hath* given the victory. The singer speaks in the full assurance of faith, that the prayer is heard, and as if he already saw the victory gained.

The prayer had been (ver. 1, 2) that God would hear and send help from the *earthly* sanctuary or Zion. Now the answer is said to come from his *holy heaven*. For if God then condescended to dwell in visible glory among men, yet he would teach his people that he is not limited by the bounds of time and space. He is not like the gods of the heathen, the god of one city or country. He sends help out of Zion; but the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. (See the recognition of this truth in Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings viii. 27, etc.) Calvin sees expressed in the earthly sanctuary made by hands the grace and condescension of God to his people; in

the heavenly, his infinite power, greatness, and majesty.

STRENGTH OF THE SALVATION, or, "saving" or "victorious strength."

7. According to the law, Israel was forbidden to maintain a standing army. See the directions concerning the king, Deut. xvii. 16. This law, however, does not seem to have been observed, at least in later times. Solomon at any rate gathered together chariots and horsemen (1 Kings x. 26-29).

With the sentiment here expressed, comp. David's words to Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 45, and Ps. xxxiii. 16, etc. Similar language is common in the prophets. The basis of it all is to be found in the law (Deut. xx. 2-4; xxxii. 30).

8. Again preterites of confidence, describing what shall be in the war, as what already is accomplished. "Great certainly is the faith," says Luther, "which hath such courage by remembering the name of the Lord. Soldiers in our day are wont, when they go into battle, to recall to mind the brave exploits of their fathers, or former victories, and the like, wherewith to warm and stir their hearts. But let our princes remember the name of God, wherein all salvation and victory do stand."

9. After the solo, the chorus again take up the strain.

O JEHOVAH, SAVE THE KING, etc. Such is the rendering of the LXX, which is also followed by the Vulg., *Domine saluum fac regem*, whence our "God save the King." According to the Masoretic

*The people and Levites.*

9 O Jehovah, save the king!

May he answer us when we cry (unto him)!

punctuation, on the other hand, the rendering would be, "Save, O Jehovah; may the king answer us," etc. This last is adopted by Delitzsch, who, however, understands by the king, Jehovah (re-

ferring to xlvi. 2 [3]), which is quite unnecessary, and only introduces confusion into the Psalm. The king is "the anointed" of verse 6. See also note on verse 5.

<sup>a</sup> יִרְשָׁנָה, Piel with termination הֵפֿ for הִפֿ, optative, as in 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

<sup>b</sup> נִהַל. "We will set up," or rather, "wave our banners." The LXX apparently read נִהַל, as they render *μεγαλυνθήσομεθα*.

## PSALM XXI.

THE last Psalm was a litany before the king went forth to battle. This is apparently a Te Deum on his return. In that the people cried, "Jehovah give thee according to thy heart's desire"; in this they thank God who has heard their prayer: "The wish of his heart hast thou given him."

Hupfeld's objection to this view of the Psalm, viz. that the latter part of it speaks of *future* victories, and that, therefore, if composed for any special occasion at all, it was more likely intended as a hymn on going into battle, is surely of no force. What singer, in writing an Ode of Thanksgiving for the past, would not utter a hope for the future? The victory which he celebrated was, he would believe, but one in a long series of brilliant successes which Jehovah would vouchsafe to the arms of his anointed. He could not but augur a glorious future from a glorious past.

Again, it has been said that the expression in verse 3, "Thou puttest a crown of gold upon his head," makes it more probable that the Psalm was composed on the occasion of a coronation, (though some think the allusion is to the crown of the king of Rabbah which David took, and "it was set upon his head," 2 Sam. xii. 30,) and verse 4, "He asked life of thee," etc. seems to intimate that *long life*, and not victory over enemies, was the subject of the wish and request mentioned in verse 3. On the other hand, the *past* tenses in verses 2 and 4

compel us to suppose that the monarch had already reigned for some time, and so exclude the idea of a coronation. See further in the note to verse 3.

The Psalm was evidently sung in the Temple, either by the whole congregation, or by a choir of Levites. Like the last, it is Messianic, and in the same sense. Each Jewish monarch was but a feeble type of Israel's true King; and all the hopes and aspirations of pious hearts, however they might have for their *immediate* object the then reigning monarch, whether David himself or one of David's children, still looked beyond these to him who should be David's Lord as well as his son.

The Targum renders מֶלֶךְ, "king," in verse 1, by מְשִׁיחָא, "King Messiah"; and Rashi observes: "Our old doctors interpreted this Psalm of King Messiah; but in order to meet the schismatics (i.e. the Christians) it is better to understand it of David himself."

It falls into two strophes:

I. A prayer to Jehovah on behalf of the king. Here we have the gladness of the king ascribed (1) to what Jehovah has done, is doing, and will do in his behalf; and (2) to the fact that the king *trusteth* in Jehovah (ver. 1-7).

II. Good wishes and words of happy augury addressed to the king himself, who is assured of victory over all his enemies (ver. 8-12).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

1 JEHOVAH, in thy strength shall the king be glad,

And in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult!

2 The wish of his heart hast thou granted him;

And the desire<sup>a</sup> of his lips hast thou not refused. [Selah.]

3 For thou comest to meet him with blessings of prosperity;

Thou puttest a crown of fine gold upon his head.

1, 2. Introduction. Jehovah has answered the prayer of the king, and so filled him with joy.

1. STRENGTH . . . SALVATION (or, SAVING HELP), words used especially of strength and succor vouchsafed in battle. The former may either = צִבְיָה (as viii. 2 [3]; xxviii. 8), "a bulwark, defence," etc., or it may mean "the divine strength as imparted to the king, and manifested by him in the war" (as lxviii. 28 [29]).

3-6. The manner in which the king's prayer has been answered.

The blessings vouchsafed to him. BLESSINGS OF PROSPERITY, i.e. blessings which bring and consist in prosperity; cf. Prov. xxiv. 25.

The verbs in 3, 5, 6 are best rendered as *presents* (not, with Calvin and others, as *futures*, and certainly not, with Hupfeld, as *preterites*). In each case they are employed to represent the result or con-

- 4 He asked life of thee :—Thou gavest (it) him,  
Length of days, for ever and ever.
- 5 Great is his glory through thy salvation ;  
Honor and majesty dost thou lay upon him.
- 6 For thou makest him (full of) blessings for ever ;  
Thou dost gladden him with joy in thy presence.
- 7 For the king trusteth in Jehovah,  
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

*To the King.*

- 8 Thy hand shall find <sup>b</sup> all thine enemies ;  
Thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee ;

sequence of the past action denoted by the preterites immediately going before. The singer looks on, as it were, and sees the petition granted before his eyes. "Thou *hast* not refused his request; for thou *comest* to meet him with blessings," etc.

A CROWN OF FINE GOLD. I see no reason to suppose a reference either to David's first coronation, or to his taking the crown of the king of Rabbath, 2 Sam. xii. 30. "Thou puttest a crown of fine gold upon his head" may only mean, "Thou givest him kingly dignity and presence." The parallelism with the first member of the verse, "Thou comest to meet him," etc., would lead us rather, I think, to understand this member as a poetical figure than as the literal assertion of an historical fact.

4. FOREVER AND EVER. There is no difficulty in this expression, even as applied to David. It was usual to pray that the king might live forever (1 Kings i. 31; Neh. ii. 3, etc.), and a like anticipation of an endless life occurs in other Psalms (xxiii. 6; lxi. 6 [7]; xci. 16). The Chald., the older Rabbinical, and other commentators have been led by the form of expression here and ver. 6, which they supposed to be inapplicable to any earthly monarch, to refer the Psalm to the Messiah. Still, this would not exclude a primary reference to David, although we know that whatever was true of the glory and dignity and

length of life of David as king of Israel, is far truer in its spiritual and eternal sense of Christ the Son of David.

5. SALVATION, see on ver. 1 and xx. 5.

6. Lit., "*Thou makest him blessings*," i.e. blessed himself, and the bearer of blessings to others. Comp. Gen. xii. 2; Isa. xix. 24; Ezek. xxxiv. 26. For the expression, JOY IN THY PRESENCE, comp. xvi. 11.

7. A reason why the blessing is vouchsafed. It is a blessing given to faith. The king trusts not in himself, not in chariots or horses, but in the Most High. This verse does, it is true, prepare the way for what follows, but it is not to be regarded (with Hengst. and Delitzsch) as the beginning of a new strophe. It most appropriately closes the strophe which begins with the words, "In thy strength," etc.

Nothing is more common in the Psalms than for a new strophe to begin by a resumption of the thought with which the strophe immediately preceding concludes. The king, who was spoken of in the 3d pers. at the beginning of the Psalm, is here again also spoken of in the 3d person. And thus a preparation is made for the transition to a direct address, with which the next strophe opens.

8. The hope passing into a prophecy that in every battle the king will be victorious over his enemies.



9 Thou shalt make them as a furnace of fire in the time of thy wrathfulness :

Jehovah in his anger shall consume them ; and a fire shall devour them.

10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth,  
And their seed from among the children of men.

11 For they intended <sup>c</sup> evil against thee ;  
They imagined a mischievous device, which they cannot perform.

12 For thou shalt make them turn their back : <sup>a</sup>  
On thy strings thou shalt make ready (thine arrows)  
against the face of them.

13 Be thou exalted, Jehovah, in thy strength ;  
So will we hymn and praise thy might.

9. THOU SHALT MAKE THEM AS A FURNACE OF FIRE. This is capable of two interpretations : (1) We may take the word "as a furnace" as the accus., in apposition with the pron. suffix, so that it will be equivalent to "as if they were in a furnace," or by a metonymy the furnace may be put for the fuel which it consumes (as lxxxiii. 14, "Thou wilt make them ... as the fire which consumeth the wood," instead of "as the wood which the fire consumes"; see also Zech. xii. 6). (2) "As a furnace" may here be nominative, and so not his enemies, but the king himself be compared to a furnace. "Thou shalt do with them, as a furnace would, viz. consume them." There is a similar ambiguity in the reference of the image in xxxix. 11 [12].

IN THE TIME OF THY WRATHFULNESS, lit. "of thy countenance," here, as turned in anger upon his enemies. Hupfeld argues that this phrase can only be employed of God, not of any human

monarch, and consequently interprets the whole of this second division of the Psalm as a prayer to God. But the word is used of the presence of a king, 2 Sam. xvii. 11 (where E. V. has, "that thou go to battle in *thine own person*"; lit. "thy *face* or *presence* goeth"), and we find the same sentiment Prov. xvi. 14; xix. 12.

Observe the rhythmical structure; two long lines (ver. 9, (a) and (b)), followed by two short ones (ver. 10, (a) and (b)). The first describe the *process* of destruction, the last, its *consummation*.

10. THEIR FRUIT = children, posterity, etc., Lam. ii. 20; Hosea ix. 16; more fully "fruit of the womb," cxxvii. 3; cxxxii. 11.

13. The singer has done with his good wishes and prophecies for the king. Now he turns to the Giver of victory, and prays him to manifest himself in all his power and glory, that his people may ever acknowledge him as the only source of their strength.

<sup>a</sup> אֶרֶץ. The word occurs only here; no doubt connected with רֵשׁ, רֵשׁ; lit. *to be empty*, hence *to want, desire*, etc. (Arab. وُش, *avidum esse*). The LXX rightly render δέησις.

<sup>b</sup> מִצָּה in clause (a), as Isa. x. 10, and מִצָּה with acc. in (b), as 1

Sam. xxiii. 17. The difference seems to be that the former means "*to reach after, to aim at*;" the latter, "*to find out, attain to*." But see cxxxv. 10, 11, where the verb *הרג* is followed both by the accus. and the prep. without any difference of meaning.

<sup>c</sup> *פִּי* gives the reason for this destruction of the king's enemies. Or perhaps logically the perfects are concessive, "for *though* they have intended, etc. . . yet they can effect nothing." *נָטַי עֲלֶיהָ*, either they have *spread* against thee evil (like a net, Lat. *tendere insidias*); or they have *bent* against thee, etc. (like a bow, Lat. *tendere arcum*).

<sup>d</sup> Turn the back, lit. "the shoulder," *שֵׁית שֶׁכֶם* = *נָהַן עוֹרָה*, xviii. 41. *הִבֵּן*, "Thou shalt aim" (sc. thine arrows), as xi. 2, et al.

## PSALM XXII.

IN the midst of enemies who are thirsting for his life, and in anguish of mind almost bordering on despair, a sufferer cries to God for help. There is perhaps no Psalm in which the sense of loneliness is so utter, none in which the peril is so imminent; for "the parting of the raiment" is only the last act of indignity before he is put to death.

The Psalm which has the greatest similarity to this is the sixty-ninth; but there is this observable difference between the two, that in this Psalm we hear only the accents of lamentable complaint, the cry of suffering and of sorrow, whilst in that the complaint of the sufferer turns finally into bitter imprecation upon his enemies.

According to the inscription, this is one of David's Psalms. We know, however, of no circumstances in his life to which it can possibly be referred. In none of his persecutions by Saul was he ever reduced to such straits as those here described. Nor is Calvin's explanation satisfactory, when he suggests that David gathers up into one view the whole history of his past sufferings and persecutions. There is a distinctness in the enumeration of circumstances, as in verses 18, 19, which connects the Psalm evidently with some particular occasion.

The older Jewish interpreters felt the difficulty, and thought that the sorrows of Israel in exile were the subject of the singer's complaint. Kimchi, citing this opinion, thinks that by "the hind of the dawn" is meant the congregation of Israel in their *present* dispersion; Rashi, that David here prophesied of the exile in Babylon. They were led to this view, no doubt, in some measure by the high hopes entertained in the latter part of the Psalm of the conversion of all nations to the

faith and worship of Jehovah, — hopes which could not, it seemed to them, be the fruit of an *individual's* sufferings. Without adopting this view to the full extent, it is so far worthy of consideration that it points to what is probably the correct view, viz. that the Psalm was composed by one of the exiles during the Babylonish captivity. And though the feelings and expressions are clearly individual, not national, yet they are the feelings and expressions of one who suffers not merely as an individual, but, so to speak, in a representative character.

Naturally, one who was made the scoff and derision of the heathen, and the object of their worst cruelty, would cling to the thought that he suffered not only as an individual, but as one of the chosen of God. The bitterness of his grief was that God — so it seemed — had forsaken him; the joy born out of that grief was that he should yet praise God for his saving health in the midst of his brethren (delivered like himself out of the hands of their oppressors), and that thus, and as a consequence of this deliverance, all the kindreds of the nations should worship before the Lord.

But we must not narrow the application of the Psalm to the circumstances of the original sufferer. It has evidently a far higher reference. It looks forward to Christ. It is a foreshadowing of him and of his passion; and arguing from the analogy of the sixteenth Psalm, we might even say a conscious foreshadowing. He who thus suffered and prayed and hoped in the land of his captivity might have seen by the eye of faith that another, far mightier than he, must also suffer, and be set at naught of the heathen, and rejected of men, that through him salvation might come to the Gentiles. This truth of a suffering Messiah seems, indeed, to have been taught more clearly towards the latter days of the nation's history; and surely it was most fitting that at the very time when the nation itself was shown how, through its own sufferings in exile, the heathen were to be claimed for Jehovah, it should also learn how, through the sufferings of the Great Deliverer, all its hopes would be fulfilled. Thus the history of Israel was fashioned to be typical of the history of Redemption, as well as that of the individual Israelite to be typical of Christ.

The references in the New Testament to this Psalm, as fulfilled in Christ, are many. The first words of it were uttered by Jesus on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 46. The scorn of the passers-by and the shaking of the head in verse 7, have their counterpart in the story of the crucifixion, Matt. xxvii. 39. The words of verse 8 are found in Matt. xxvii. 43; the intense thirst, "my tongue cleaveth to my jaws," of verse 15 in John xix. 28; the parting of the garments, etc. verse 18, in John xix.

23; the piercing (if that is a correct rendering; see note on the verse) of the hands and feet in verse 16, in the nailing to the cross. Similarly we are justified in interpreting the latter part of the Psalm of the fruit of Christ's passion and resurrection by the way in which verse 22 is quoted, Heb. ii. 11, etc,

The Psalm consists of two parts :

I. Complaint and prayer (ver. 1-21)

II. Vows and hopes (ver. 22-31).

Each of these principal divisions admits of its subdivision. For we have, —

I. First, the pouring out of the heart's sorrow, with one of the tenderest appeals to God's compassionate love that ever trembled on human lips (ver. 2-11); and next, the earnest entreaty for help, because of the greatness and nearness of the peril (ver. 12-22). The peril so near, and God so far off — this is the thought which colors all, both complaint and prayer.

II. In the second part, again, we have, first, the vows of thanksgiving for deliverance, and the praising of God's name in the "midst of the congregation" (ver. 23-27). Next, the confident hope that God's kingdom shall be set up in all the earth, and that all, great and low, shall submit themselves to him (ver. 28-32).

According to a different and more general arrangement, the Psalm consists of three parts :

I. Complaint (ver. 1-10).

II. Prayer (ver. 11-21).

III. Expression of hope (ver. 22-31).

[For the Precentor. To the Melody "The Hind of the Dawn." \* A Psalm of David].

I. 1 MY God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

(Why art thou) far from helping me (and from) the words of my roaring ?

1. WHY? Not the "why" of impenitence or despair, not the sinful questioning of one whose heart rebels against his chastening, but rather the cry of a lost child who cannot understand why his father has left him, and who longs to see his father's face again.

It is the question of faith as well as of an anguish that cannot be told. For he who asks "why," nevertheless calls God

"my God," and repeats the appropriating word again and again, with the very emphasis of faith. Indeed, such a question can only be asked by one whom God has taken into covenant with himself, and to whom he has vouchsafed his promises.

What these words were in the lips of the Holy One of God, heart of man may not conceive. For a moment, in that



- 2 O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou answerest not,  
And in the night season, and keep not silence ;  
3 And thou art holy, throned above the praises of Israel.  
4 In thee our fathers trusted ;  
They trusted, and thou didst rescue them :  
5 Unto thee did they cry and were rescued,  
In thee they trusted and were not ashamed.

last agony, the Perfect Man was *alone*, — alone with the sin of the world. But it is going beyond Scripture to say that a sense of God's wrath extorted that cry. For to the last breath he was the well-beloved of the Father, and the repeated "My God," "My God," is a witness even then to his confidence in the Father's love. Stier says, with great truth: "Neither could the damned in hell so call to God and ask, nor could Christ have done so if he were really to be considered here as suffering in their place." Our Lord uses the Aramaic word *σαβαχ-θαυί* (which the Chald. paraph. gives *שבכתי*) instead of the Hebrew.

There is some doubt as to the rendering of the latter part of the verse. The LXX, are clearly wrong, *μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς σωτηρίας μου οἱ λόγοι τῶν παραπαιμάτων μου*. Jerome has "longe a salute mea verba rugitus mei." "Far from my help are the words of my roaring," i.e. there is a great gulf between my cry for help, and the obtaining of that help. Rashi and others repeat the prep. with the second noun: "Why art thou far from my help (and) from the words of my roaring"? A third interpretation is also possible: "My God, etc. . . . Why art thou far from my help? are the words of my roaring."

2. Again "my God." And this verse further explains the "why" of the first verse. It is as if he said, "I cannot understand this darkness. It is not that I have forgotten thee. Day and night I cry — *to me* (לִּי) there is no silence."

3. "Yea, moreover, *thou* art holy [or, the Holy One]. Thou canst not have changed. The history of the past, too, witnesses to thy faithfulness; our *fathers* trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver

them. But *I* — ah! I am not worthy of thy help. I am but a worm, not a man. It is not that I have ceased to seek thee; it is not that thou hast ceased to be holy; it is not that thou canst not help, for thou hast helped others; why, then, hast thou forsaken me?" It is impossible to describe the sadness, the humility, the tenderness, the longing of this complaint.

HOLY. Does it seem strange that the heart in its darkness and sorrow should find comfort in this attribute of God? No, for God's holiness is but another aspect of his faithfulness and mercy. And in that remarkable name, "the Holy One of Israel," we are taught that he who is the *holy* God is also the God who has made a covenant with his chosen. It would be impossible for an Israelite to think of God's holiness without thinking also of that covenant relationship. "Be ye holy; for I the Lord your God am holy," were the words in which Israel was reminded of their relation to God. (See especially Lev. xix. 2 [1].) We see something of this feeling in such passages as lxxxix. 15-18 [16-19], and xcix. 5-9; Hos. xi. 8, 9; Isa. xli. 14; xlvii. 4.

THRONED ABOVE THE PRAISES, etc., or *inhabiting the praises*, apparently with allusion to the phrase "dwelling between the cherubim," (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; cf. lxxx. 1 [2]; xcix. 1); but describing in a more spiritual manner the dwelling of Jehovah in his temple. THE PRAISES (plur.), with reference to the many acts of deliverance and redemption which had from time to time called forth a thankful remembrance. There is, perhaps, an allusion to Ex. xv. 11, 12.

4, 5. Thrice "they trusted," and only once "they cried."

- 6 But as for me — I am a worm, not a man,  
 A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
- 7 All they that see me, laugh me to scorn,  
 They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, (saying,)
- 8 “Cast<sup>b</sup> (thyself) upon Jehovah — let him rescue him,  
 Let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him.”
- 9 For thou art he that took me<sup>c</sup> out of the womb,  
 Thou didst make me trust, (when I was) on my mother’s  
 breasts.
- 10 On thee was I cast from the womb,  
 From my mother’s belly THOU art my God.
- II. 11 Be not far from me ; for trouble is hard at hand,  
 For there is none to help me.
- 12 Many bulls have come about me ;  
 Bashan’s strong ones have beset me round ;
- 13 They have gaped upon me with their mouth,  
 (As) a ravening and a roaring lion.
- 14 Like water am I poured out,  
 And all my bones are out of joint ;  
 My heart has become like wax,  
 Melting away in the midst of my body.

6. Every word of this verse finds its echo in Isaiah. There Israel is “a worm,” (xli. 14) ; and there “the servant of Jehovah” is one whose visage is so marred that he is not like a man” (lii. 14). See, also, Isa. xlix. 7 ; i. 6, and liii. 3, where “not belonging to men” = “not a man,” here.

7. St. Luke, in his account of our Lord’s crucifixion (xxiii. 35), has used the verb employed by the LXX, who render here, ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με.

SHOOT OUT THE LIP. Cf. xxxv. 21 ; Job xvi. 10.

SHAKE THE HEAD — clearly not as an expression of compassion, but of malicious joy. Cf. cix. 25 ; xlv. 14 [15] ; lxiv. 8 [9], where see note. See also Matt. xxvii. 39.

9. Faith turns the mockery of his enemies into an argument of deliverance.

They mock my trust in thee — yea, I do trust in thee ; for thou art he, etc.

In the first strophe the scorn and derision — in this the violence of his enemies — is the great subject of complaint.

11. Be not *far* (with reference to ver. 1), for trouble is *near*.

12. BASHAN’S STRONG ONES. The sense is given by the LXX, ταῦροι πίλεες, who are in the habit of rendering Bashan (as if allied to דַּשֶׁן, *dāshēn*, and not the name of a country) by πίων (see on lxviii. 15 [16]). The land of Bashan was celebrated for its fat pastures (cf. Deut. xxxii. 14 and Amos iv. 1 ; Ezek. xxxix. 18), extending from Jabbok to Mount Hermon, and eastward to the extreme boundary of Palestine.

14. After speaking of the violence of his tormentors, he passes on to speak of the effects of their violence upon himself.

- 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
 And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ;  
 And thou wilt lay me in the dust of death.
- 16 For dogs have come about me,  
 The assembly of evil-doers have enclosed me,  
 Piercing<sup>d</sup> my hands and my feet.
- 17 I can tell all my bones :  
 They stare, they look upon me.
- 18 They part my garments among them,  
 And upon my vesture do they cast lots.
- 19 But thou, O Jehovah, be not far (from me) ;  
 O my strength, haste thee to help me.

**I AM FOURED OUT.** Thus he describes the utter melting away of all strength of body and courage of heart, in his fear and pain. Cf. Lam. ii. 11.

**MY BONES ARE OUT OF JOINT ;** Lit. "have separated themselves," as of a man stretched upon the rack.

**15. AND THOU WILT LAY ME.** Death must be the end, and it is thy doing. Thou slayest me. So does the soul turn from seeing only the instruments of God's punishment, to God who employs those instruments. Even in the extremity of its forsakenness, it still sees God above all. We are reminded of Peter's words, "Him, being delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain."

**16. FOR DOGS ARE COME ABOUT ME.** The enemies are still compared to savage animals, but the figure is somewhat different: "dogs," not only as fierce, but as unclean. Almost the only trait of bitterness in the Psalm. We must remember that these dogs are the savage wild dogs of the East (1 Kings xiv. 11 ; Ps. lix. 6 [7], 14, 15 [15, 16]).

**PIERCING MY HANDS AND MY FEET.** The Masoretic punctuation, if adhered to, would require the rendering, "Like a lion (coming about) my hands and my feet." But the sense is poor, and the weight of critical authority is against it.

See more on this in the Critical Note.

**17. I CAN TELL.** Before, "all my bones are out of joint." Hence it would seem that the body was racked by some violent torture; not merely emaciated by starvation and suffering. And thus in his utter misery he is a gazing-stock to them that hate him: "they look upon me," i.e. with malicious satisfaction at my sufferings.

**18.** And now follows the last act of indignity, perpetrated as it were in sight of his death: his very clothes are stripped from him, and are shared as plunder among his foes. This passage clearly cannot apply to David. On the other hand, there is nothing to lead us to suppose that we have here naked prediction. There is no change in the speaker. He continues to speak of *his own* sufferings. Why may not some Jew in exile have really suffered such things, and so have prefigured in history the sufferings of Christ? If Daniel was cast to the lions, and the three children into the furnace, others may have been exposed to other forms of death not less terrible. Whether, however, we take the Psalm as typical or predictive, in any case it is a prophecy of Christ and of his sufferings on the cross. All this was fulfilled to the letter in him. See John xix. 23, etc.

**19.** Again the anxious prayer, "Be not far." First, Why art thou far from helping me (ver. 1); then, Be not far

- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,  
     My only one from the power of the dog.  
 21 Save me from the lion's mouth,  
     And from the horns of the wild oxen\*—thou hast  
     answered me.

- III. 22 So will I tell thy name to my brethren;  
     In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee:  
     (saying,)  
 23 "Ye that fear Jehovah praise him,  
     All ye the seed of Jacob glorify him,  
     And stand in awe of him, all ye the seed of Israel!  
 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of  
     the afflicted,  
     Neither hath he hid his face from him;  
     And when he cried unto him, he heard."

from me . . . for there is none to help. Now with yet greater emphasis, as in the last extremity, But *thou* (emphatic, as he turns from his persecutors and his sufferings, to fix his eyes upon his God), O Jehovah, be not far; O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20. MY ONLY ONE, or, as E.V., *my darling*. From the parallelism = *my soul, my life*. In similar connection, xxxv. 17. The LXX, in both places, *τὴν μονογενῆ μου*, Vulg., *unicam meam*. It occurs besides (Judges xi. 34) of Jephthah's daughter (see Gen. xxii. 2). *The life* is so called, either because man has but *one* life, or because it is the most precious of all things. Comp. Homer's *φίλον κῆρ*, and Plato's *τιμιωτάτη (ψυχή)*. Jerome renders *solitariam*, i.e. forsaken, which may be defended by xxv. 16; lxviii. 6 [7], but the other is preferable.

FROM THE POWER (Heb., hand) of the dog. Similarly, "from the hand of the lion and the bear," 1 Sam. xvii. 37; "from the hand of the flame, Isa. xlvi. 14.

21. THOU HAST ANSWERED ME. Are we to take this strictly as a pret. or as an imperative? It certainly *may be* the latter. (Ewald, Gr. § 346 b; Gesen. § 126,

6, c.) Here perhaps it is better to take it as a strict past, *Thou HAST answered me*; God's answer of peace and deliverance having come to the soul in the midst of its uttermost distress. "From the horns of the buffaloes—thou hast heard and delivered me" (opp. to ver. 3, "Thou hearest not"). Before it had been, "Thou answerest not"; now, at the most critical moment, faith asserts her victory, "Thou hast answered." See the same sudden transition, the same quick assurance that prayer has been heard, vi. 9; xx. 7; xxvi. 12; xxviii. 6; xxxi. 22. The vows and thanksgivings which follow are a consequence of this assurance.

22. SO OR THEREFORE WILL I TELL. (Obs. the form with *ו* paragog. as marking a consequence from what precedes.) "*My brethren = the congregation = ye that fear Jehovah*," ver. 23, i.e. the whole nation of Israel, as follows. In ver. 23 the singer calls upon the church (*ἐκκλησία*) to praise God. In ver. 24 he gives the reason for this exhortation; the experience, viz. of God's mercy and truth and condescension, chiefly to himself, though not to the exclusion of others. For God is not like



- 25 From thee (is) my praise in (the) great congregation ;  
 My vows will I pay before them that fear him.
- 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied ;  
 They shall praise Jehovah that seek him :  
 May your heart live forever !
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto  
 Jehovah,  
 And all the families of the nations shall worship  
 before thee.
- 28 For Jehovah's is the kingdom ;  
 And he ruleth among the nations.
- 29 All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and worshipped,  
 Before him shall all they that go down<sup>f</sup> into the dust  
 bend the knee,  
 And whosoever cannot keep his soul alive.<sup>g</sup>

the proud ones of the earth. He does not *despise* the afflicted.

24. THE AFFLICTION OF THE AFFLICTED. The same word is used with Messianic reference, Isa. liii. 4, 7 ; Zech. ix. 9.

NEITHER HATH HE HID (cf. x. 1 ; xiii. 1 [2] ... WHEN HE CRIED HE HEARD. What a contrast to ver. 1, 2 ! Very remarkable is this confident acknowledgment of God's goodness in hearing prayer.

25. He has spoken to the congregation ; he turns again to the Giver of his salvation, who has thus suffered him to praise him in the great congregation.

FROM THEE, *not* (as A.V.) OF THEE, as if God were the object only of his praise. It is God himself who has put this great subject of praise into his heart and into his mouth. The will and the power to praise, as well as the deliverance, come from him. Comp. cxviii. 23, where the construction is precisely the same, "from Jehovah is this."

MY VOWS — thank-offerings vowed in his trouble. The flesh of the sacrifice in such cases was to be eaten (Lev. vii. 16) ; hence the account of the banquet which follows, "they shall eat and be satisfied."

26 MAY YOUR HEART LIVE. This would have sounded more natural to our ears, if it had been, "Their heart shall live (be strong, rejoice, etc.) for ever." This abrupt transition, however, from narration in the third person to address in the second, is not unusual in Hebrew. See the next verse, and Zech. xiv. 5, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with *thee*," instead of "with *him*."

That the thank-offering and the meal which follows it are to be conceived after a spiritual, and not after a ritual, manner is clear from the high anticipations of the next verse.

27. For all the ends of the earth, all the families of the nations, are to acknowledge the God of Israel as the true King of the earth. He is the Ruler of the world, and his kingdom shall be visibly set up, and his lordship confessed.

29. The poet again returns to the figure of the banquet, and uses here the past tenses instead of the future, as is very usual with the prophets, because in vision he already beheld his hopes fulfilled. Hence he speaks of what *is to be* as if it already *were*. All "the fat ones of the earth" (the rich and mighty), as well as

30 A seed shall serve him;

It shall be told to the generation (to come)<sup>a</sup> concerning the Lord.

31 They shall come; they shall declare his righteousness

To a people that shall be born, that he hath done (it).

the poor "who cannot keep his soul alive," i.e. who is so poor that he has not the bare means of subsistence, shall sit down together at that banquet in the kingdom of heaven. (The same banquet which is spoken of Isa. xxv. 6.)

THEY THAT GO DOWN INTO THE DUST. Here not literally "the dead," as in the expression, "they that go down into the pit," etc., but rather, they who are "ready to go down," whose misery is so great that they are at the point to die.

30. IT SHALL BE TOLD, i.e. they shall hear of him and of his saving help.

31. THEY, i.e. this new generation, this church which the Lord has planted.

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS not only as manifested in the deliverance of his righteous servant, but as manifested in all his great work of salvation, both in the suffering and in the exaltation of Christ, and also in providing the feast for all who will partake thereof.

In the latter part of the Psalm — from the words "Thou hast answered me" (ver. 21) to the last word, "He hath done it" — the heart lifts itself up on the wings of faith, and the prophet sees visions ever brighter and brighter opening before his gaze.

First, he will praise God in the congregation of Israel, and make known his name to his brethren. Then, all nations shall come and sit down at the banquet of fat things, and worship before the Lord. Lastly, to future ages also shall God's righteousness be declared.

This hope of the conversion of other nations to the faith of God's elect was in an especial manner characteristic of the period of the return from the Babylonish captivity. The prophecies of Zechariah are full of it; and so are many of the Psalms which probably date from that period.

It is impossible not to feel how far such hopes must have extended beyond the personal fortunes of the singer, or any results that he could possibly have anticipated from his own sufferings. If even in those sufferings he was but a feeble type of the Great Sufferer who should give his life for the world, certainly in the thanksgiving for his deliverance, and the results of that deliverance, there must have been but a very faint foreshadowing of the joy set before him who endured the cross, and who saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. Unnatural as I cannot help thinking that interpretation is which assumes that the Psalmist himself never felt the sorrows which he describes, nor the thankfulness which he utters, but only put himself into the place of the Messiah who was to come, — I hold that to be a far worse error which sees here no foreshadowing of Christ at all. Indeed, the coincidence between the sufferings of the Psalmist and the sufferings of Christ is so remarkable, that it is very surprising that any one should deny or question the relation between the type and the antitype.

<sup>a</sup> UPON THE HIND OF THE DAWN. The LXX render ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀντιλήψεως τῆς ἑωθινῆς, Vulg., *pro susceptione matutina*, renderings which are based on a confusion between אֵילָנִי and אֵילֵּנִי, which occurs ver. 20 (Heb.) Theodore, adopting this, gives as an explanation ἀντ. ἑωθ. ἡ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν ἐπιφάνεια. Rashi says that it is the name of a musical instrument, but that another account refers it to the congrega-

tion of Israel; Kimchi interprets it of Israel in exile, "a hind fair as the morning dawn" (Song of Sol. ii. 7; vi. 10). Luther and others, of "a hind early chased," with reference to our Lord, as having been brought in the early morning before the council. Jerome, "pro cervo matutino," which he explains, "Ipse (Christus) et non alius quasi mane et aurora paratus est nobis." The Midrash refers to Song of Sol. ii. 8, and the Targum sees an allusion to "the morning-sacrifice," which was offered so soon as the watchman on the pinnacle of the Temple cried בִּרְקַבְרָקַי, "the rays of the morning do lighten." The most natural view of the words, however, is that first given by Aben-Ezra, according to whom, "the hind of the morn" are the first words of some other song, to the music of which this was to be sung. The prep. עַל occurs in this sense in the inscriptions of other Psalms, as ix., lvi., lx., etc. The phrase itself seems to have arisen from comparing the rays of the early sun shooting above the horizon to the horns of the hind. Hence the Arabian poets, too, speak of the morning or sun-rising as "the horns of the dawn."

<sup>b</sup> גַּל is neither inf. abs. (as קָב, Num. xxiii. 25), nor 3 pret. after the analogy of אָזַר and בּוֹשַׁשׁ, but imperat., as xxxvii. 5; Prov. xvi. 3. Lit. "roll," viz. thy burden, or thyself, upon Jehovah. The abrupt transition from the 2d to the 3d pers. is too common to occasion any difficulty. The LXX. it is true, have ἡλπισεν ἐπὶ Κύριον; and similarly in the words of the mockers under the cross, πέποιθεν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν (Matt. xxiii. 47).

<sup>c</sup> גָּחַי (part. of גָּחַ = גָּחַי). This form of the part. of verbs "ע" is found in other instances, and not only in the case of intrans., but also of trans. verbs (cf. לוֹט, Isa. xxv. 7; Zech. x. 5). See Gesen. Gram. § 72, Rem. 1. This verb occurs intrans. Job xxxviii. 8, "breaking forth," i.e. from the womb; trans., Micah iv. 10. Others take גָּחַי as the infin., "my breaking forth," i.e. the author, cause, etc. of my breaking forth. So Rosenm.: "*Tu rò prodire meum*, i.e. auctor proditus mei ex utero, per metonymiam effectus," etc. But such a metonymy is harsh, and grammatically unnecessary.

<sup>d</sup> כְּאֵרִי. There is scarcely any passage of the Old Testament, the true reading and interpretation of which have given rise to so much discussion. The grounds for a critical conclusion are furnished, first, by the mss.; and secondly, by the ancient versions.

I. The mss., almost without exception, have (1) the present Masoretic reading, i.e. either כְּאֵרִי or כְּאֵרִי, "like a lion." The Targum in the Antwerp Polyglot has נִכְתִּין אִירִי וְרֹגְלִי, with a various reading, "post נִכְתִּין add. in aliis כְּאֵרִי (or הִיךְ אִרִּי)," and with this addition it

is found in Walton's Polyglot. (2) In only two genuine Jewish mss. do we find כָּאֲרִי. But in one of these (Kenn. 39) it would seem that the י has been altered by a later hand into ו, and the other (De Rossi, 337) has כָּאֲרִי, a union of both readings, Jacob Ben Chayim, however, in the Masora finalis, says that he had found כָּאֲרִי as the K'thibh, and כָּאֲרִי as the K'ri in good mss., and this is supported by the Masora Magna on Num. xxiv. 9. (3) For כָּרִי there is still less to be said. It is only found in three late mss., and in two of these on the margin; and is generally attributed to Christians, as it is by Joseph and David Kimchi, In the Bereshith Rabba of R. Moses Hadarshan, however, it is ascribed to the *Tikkun Sopherim*.

II. On the other hand, the ancient versions are all in favor of a verb, though they attach to it different significations: (1) "They pierced, bored through" (the root כָּאֲר being regarded as a cognate form of כּוֹר and כָּרָה). So the LXX, ὤρυσαν; Syr., حَكِه; Arab., ثَقَبُوا; Vulg., *foderunt*. (2) "They bound." So Aquila in his 2d edition, Symm. and Jerome, who in some mss. has *vinxerunt*, in others *fixerunt*. In this case the word must have been associated with the Arab. root كَلَر, "to gather together," and so "to bind," etc. (3) "They put to shame." Aq. 1st ed. ὀσχυναν, no doubt because he supposed it to be cognate with Aram. and Talmudic כָּאֲרִי and כָּרִי; cf. the Syr. طَاو. But as regards interpretation (2), it may be observed it is very doubtful whether the Arabic root can properly mean "to bind," as Gesen., De Wette, and Winer maintain. In the Kamus it is said that the verb كَلَر in the 2d conj. means "to dig the earth," and with acc. of the pers. is equivalent to طَعَن, "to pierce through." (See this fully discussed in Reinke's note). As regards (3), the Syr. طَاو means "to put to shame, in the way of rebuke and reproach," not of bodily wounding or disfiguring, as Aquila probably understood it.

III. How is this direct opposition between the apparent reading of the mss. and the interpretations of the versions to be reconciled? This can only be done by neglecting the Masoretic *punctuation*, whilst we retain the reading כָּאֲרִי. This word, with different vowels, may be a participle instead of a noun, and we may thus obtain the required verbal meaning. It will then be a plur. constr., and should be either written כָּאֲרִי, if we assume a form כָּאֲר, or כָּאֲרִי, if, as is probable, the root is כָּרִי, the א being introduced as in קָאם, Hos. x. 14; רָאָמָה, Zech. xiv. 10. (See Gesen. § 71, A. 1). Others would retain the Masoretic punctuation, and regard כָּאֲרִי as an imperfect plural absol., with termination יִי instead of יִם. The existence of such an apocopated plur. is



recognized both by Gesen. § 86, *b*, and Ewald § 177, *a*, but the examples are questionable, and we should then have *two* unusual forms combined in the same word.

There can be very little doubt, therefore, that the Masoretic interpretation ought to be given up, especially as “like a lion” does not suit the context, and leaves the structure of the sentence incomplete. And we are left to follow the versions in rendering either “piercing, transfixing,” or, “binding my hands and my feet.”

IV. It may be observed that the Masora on Isa. xxxviii. 13 says, that the form כָּאֲרִי occurs in two different senses (בְּתָרִי לְשׁוֹנֵי) there and here, but it does not say what the meaning is here. The Targum (which, according to Jahn, is as late as the seventh or eighth century) combines both meanings, and gives נִכְתְּרִי דִּיךְ כָּאֲרִיא, *mordentes sicut leo*. And Abraham of Zante, in his Paraphrase in rhyme (quoted by Delitzsch), גַּם כָּאֲרִי יָרִי וְרַגְלֵי אֲסָרִי. “Like a lion (i.e. as men bind a lion) they have bound my hands and my feet.”

<sup>e</sup> רָאִים, an abbrev. form of רִאִים, xxix. 6, “wild oxen,” which still are found in herds on the east of the Jordan. LXX, μονοκεράτων; Jerome, *unicornium*, whence the rendering of the English Version.

<sup>f</sup> יוֹרֵדִי, “ready to go down.” Comp. אוֹבֵד (Prov. xxxi. 6), “one who is ready to perish.”

<sup>g</sup> וְנִפְשׁוֹ לֹחַ, a relative clause (with the common omission of the relat.), instead of the part. here necessary (comp. xxxvii. 21; lxxviii. 39), because לֹא cannot stand before the part. or inf. For הָיָה לֹ, comp. Ezek. xviii. 27. Lit. “and he who *hath* not (hitherto), and so *cannot* keep his soul alive.”

<sup>h</sup> לְדוֹר א', “to the generation,” i.e. the future one = לְדוֹר א' (xlvi. 14). So, too, even without the article, lxxi. 18. The article here, I think, necessitates this interpretation, which, moreover, agrees with what follows as to the continuance and propagation of this testimony concerning the Lord. (For this use of ל see the Lexicons). Delitzsch renders: “A seed which shall serve him, shall be reckoned to the Lord for the generation” (i.e. which peculiarly belongs to, and serves him), and refers to lxxxvii. 5 for a similar use of וְסָפָר, “counted as in a census.” But the other is preferable.

## PSALM XXIII.

THIS Psalm breathes throughout a spirit of the calmest and most assured trust in God; it speaks of a peace so deep, a serenity so profound, that even the thought of the shadow of death cannot trouble it. Perhaps there is no Psalm in which the absence of all doubt, misgiving, fear, anxiety, is so remarkable; and certainly no image could have been devised, more beautifully descriptive of rest and safety and trustful happiness than that of the sheep lying down in the deep, rich meadow-grass, beside the living stream, under the care of a tender and watchful shepherd. This feeling of confidence is expressed in three different ways: first, "I cannot (or, shall not) want"; next, "I will fear no evil"; lastly, "I will dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever."

On the other hand, God's care for the soul is represented under a twofold image. First, Jehovah is the true shepherd (ver. 1, 2). Next, he is the bountiful host (ver. 5), who exercises princely hospitality towards his guests. But there is no marked transition from the one to the other. In verses 3, 4, the figure of the *shepherd* is gradually lost in the representation of Jehovah as the faithful *guide* of his people, and so the way is prepared for the introduction of the next image, which occupies the rest of the Psalm.

It is unnecessary to refer this Psalm to any particular period of David's history. As the outpouring of a heart which has found perfect rest in God, it was most probably written in advanced years, after a long experience of God's goodness. Its language is colored by the reminiscences of his past life. His own shepherd experience no doubt suggested the image of the former part; and in the latter we may perhaps trace a recollection, more or less distinct, of the circumstances mentioned 2 Sam. xvii. 27-29, when, on David's coming to Mahanaim, during Absalom's rebellion, he and his party were succored and refreshed in their faintness and weariness, through the kindness of Barzillai and other friends who supplied their wants.

[A Psalm of David.]

1 JEHOVAH is my shepherd, I shall not want.

1. MY SHEPHERD. The image, natural amongst a nation of shepherds, is first employed by Jacob (Gen. xlviii. 15), "The God which fed me"; lit. "my shepherd" (xlix. 24). There, as here,

God is the shepherd of the *individual*, (cf. Ps. cxix. 176), still more frequently of his *people* (lxxviii. 52; lxxx. 1 [2]; Micah vii. 14; Isa. lxiii. 13, and especially Ezek. xxxiv.; most beautifully

2 In pastures<sup>a</sup> of grass he maketh me to lie down ;

Beside waters of rest doth he guide me.

3 He restoreth my soul ;

He leadeth me in paths of righteousness,

For his name's sake.

and touchingly in Isa. xl. 11). So in the New Testament, of Christ (John x. 1-16 ; xxi. 15-17 ; Heb. xiii. 20 ; 1 Pet. ii. 25 ; v. 4). To understand all the force of this image, we must remember what the Syrian shepherd was, how very unlike our modern shepherd. "Beneath the burning skies and the clear starry night of Palestine," says Robertson, "there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where, at any moment, sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save them by personal hazard." It is the country, too, we may add, of long, scorching summer days, and intense and parching drought, when the fresh herbage and the living stream are beyond all price, and the shepherd's care and skill must be taxed to provide for his flock. "And thus there grows up between the man and the dumb creatures he protects, a kind of friendship. . . . Alone in those vast solitudes, with no human being near, the shepherd and the sheep feel a life in common. Differences disappear—the vast interval between the man and the brute; the single point of union is felt strongly. One is the love of the protector; the other the love of the grateful life; and so between lives so distant there is woven by night and day, by summer suns and winter frosts, a living network of sympathy: The greater and the less mingle their being together; they feel each other: 'The shepherd knows his sheep, and is known of them.'"

Again, on our Lord's appropriation of the figure to himself, the same writer says with much force and beauty, "'I am the Good Shepherd.' In the dry

and merciless logic of a commentary, trying laboriously to find out minute points of ingenious resemblance in which Christ is like a shepherd, the glory and the tenderness of this sentence are dried up. But try to feel, by imagining what the lonely Syrian shepherd must feel towards the helpless things which are the companions of his daily life, for whose safety he stands in jeopardy every hour, and whose value is measurable to him, not by price, but by his own jeopardy, and then we have reached some notion of the love which Jesus meant to represent, that eternal tenderness which bends over us,—infinitely lower though we be in nature,—and knows the name of each, and the trials of each, and thinks for each with a separate solicitude, and gave himself for each with a sacrifice as special and a love as personal as if in the whole world's wilderness were none other but that one." (*Sermons*, 2d series, pp. 286, etc.)

I SHALL NOT WANT; or, perhaps, "I cannot want," as describing not only the present experience, but as expressing confidence for all time to come. Observe the absolute, *I shall not want*, stronger than in xxxiv. 10 [11], or Deut. ii. 6, or viii. 9. These words are the key-note of the Psalm. David speaks them out of the fulness of his own experience. As he had watched over, and provided for, and tended his flock, leading them to the greenest pastures, and finding for them the water which in that country was so scarce, and guarding them by night from beasts of prey, so he felt his God would provide for and watch over him.

2. WATERS OF REST, or "refreshment." (Not "still waters," as in the very different phrase, Isa. viii. 6.) LXX, rightly, ὕδατα ἀναπαύσεως.

3, 4. The image of the shepherd is

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,<sup>b</sup>

I will fear no evil, for thou art with me :

Thy rod and thy staff — they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me,

In the presence of mine enemies :

Thou hast anointed my head with oil,

My cup runneth over.

here partially lost in the use of proper, instead of figurative terms.

3. PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. This can hardly mean only "straight paths," as opposed to crooked ; i.e. as Aben Ezra explains it, "He will not make me go over hills and valleys, but on smooth, level ground." There is rather a blending of the natural image with its spiritual counterpart. It makes some difference, no doubt, whether we suppose the Psalmist to be speaking here only of God's *providential* care in giving him "the blessings of this life," or whether we suppose him to refer also to God's dealings in grace. Apparently he is speaking chiefly of the former, but certainly not exclusively ; and, indeed, what truly devout mind would be careful to separate the two ? The God of providence is the God of grace ; and who can tell where the one ends, and the other begins ? Providence runs up into grace, and grace loses itself in providence. Hence he adds :

FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE ; not for my deserving, but out of his own goodness, for the manifestation of his own glory, and the furtherance of his kingdom upon earth.

4. This consciousness of divine protection is his support, not only in quiet times, but even when dangers threaten. "Even though I should be called upon to walk," etc.

THEY, — emphatic, because they are *thy* rod and *thy* staff. Calvin : "Neque tamen se omni metu vacuum esse jactavit David, sed tantum fore superiorem, ut intrepide, quocumque deductus fuerit a pastore suo, pergat : quod ex contextu melius patet. Primo dicit : *non timebo*

*malum* : sed causam mox reddens, aperte fatetur se in baculi pastoralis respectu quaerere timoris remedium. Quorsum enim consolatio ista, nisi quia metus eum sollicitat ?"

It matters little, Stier observes, in which order the connection in verses 2-4 is taken. "Either the soul begins with the certainty of the present consolation, and the secret, inner refreshment in the paths of righteousness where the Lord leads, in order thence to derive confidence for the rest of the way, or it looks forward at once, in hope, verse 2 [supposing the verbs there to be rendered as *futures* instead of *presents*], to the *future rest* in the pastures, and by the waters of eternal life, in order that thence a light may fall on the dark valley of its present pilgrimage. For to comprehend both fulfilment and foretaste in one consolation, which shall be suitable to each varied feeling and circumstance, is the purpose of the spirit in this Psalm, which cannot be exhausted by any merely one-sided interpretation."

5, 6. A guest at a royal banquet. God is even more than a shepherd who provides for the wants of his sheep. He is a king who lavishes his bounty in rich provision for his guests. This is an image also adopted by our Lord in his parables (Matt. xxii. 1, etc.).

5. PREPARE A TABLE, the common formula for furnishing a meal (Prov. ix. 2 ; Isa. xxi. 5 ; Ezek. xxiii. 41).

IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES ; i.e. who look on, but cannot harm me. The addition of this remark would intimate that we have more here than merely a figure. Some recollection of



6 Surely goodness and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell <sup>c</sup> in the house of Jehovah for length of days.

the past seems to break out which probably suggested it.

On the anointing the head, which was customary at banquets, comp. xcii. 10 [11].

6. I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH FOR LENGTH OF DAYS. What did the Psalmist mean by this? The house of Jehovah might refer primarily to the tabernacle, as later to the temple. And if so, that to which he looked forward was access to God in his sanctuary, and the blessedness of communion with him there. But is there no more than this? no anticipation of a more perfect

and abiding blessedness in the everlasting sanctuary above? To us the language seems to bear such a meaning. It may not have done so to David. To him it was enough that he was the sheep for whom the Divine Shepherd cared, the guest for whom the Divine Host provided. He was thinking, perhaps, of this life more than of the next. Calvin, however, remarks: "*Habitabo in domo Jovae. Hac clausula aperte demonstrat, se in terrenis voluptatibus aut commodis minime subsistere, sed scopum sibi in coelo figere ad quem omnia referat.*"

<sup>a</sup> נָזַח only occurring in the plural, and in poetry. (A sing. נִזְח only in Job viii. 6, and a plur. constr. נִזְח, only Zeph. ii. 6.) It probably means "meadows, pastures"; this, at least, seems the most suitable in passages like lxv. 13; Joel i. 19; ii. 22; Amos i. 2, etc. In other places, however, it means "habitations," as lxxiv. 20; Jer. xxv. 37, from a root נָזַח, נִזְח, "to sit, to rest." Hence some would interpret it here "resting-places," but the former, which is supported by usage, is preferable.

<sup>b</sup> צֶלְמָתָה. Hupfeld, following earlier authorities referred to by Abulwalid and Kimchi, objects to this being regarded as a compound word, "shadow of death," because, as he justly observes, such compound forms are extremely rare in Hebrew, except in proper names, and the general signification of "darkness" is all that is required. He therefore supposes that it ought to be pointed צֶלְמִית, formed from צֶלַם, "shadow, darkness," etc., after the analogy מַלְכוּת, מַלְכִּית, etc.

<sup>c</sup> שְׁבִתִּי, according to the present punctuation, can only be pret. of שִׁב, and then שִׁב וּבֵאָה בְּ would be for שִׁב וּבֵאָה בְּ. Others take it as a defective writing for שְׁבִתִּי. It is better, however, to regard it as the inf. with suff., from יָשַׁב, שְׁבִתִּי being for שְׁבִתִּי; cf. xxvii. 4.

## PSALM XXIV.

THIS grand choral hymn was in all probability composed and sung on the occasion of the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David on Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi.). It was a day of solemn gladness and triumph. No long period had elapsed since David had wrested the stronghold of Zion from the last remnant of the hill-tribes of the Canaanites which lingered in Palestine. Henceforth this mountain-city, deemed by its ancient inhabitants impregnable, was selected by the conqueror as the seat of the royal residence, and the centre of religious worship; and thither, after having subdued his enemies, he determined to bring the ark, which for nearly fifty years had been left neglected at Kirjath-Jearim. It is difficult for us to conceive the feelings, at once of the most exalted and fervent patriotism and of the deepest religious enthusiasm, which would be awakened in the hearts of the people by such an event. The land was now indeed their own land; the king of their choice reigned over them; the most sacred emblem of Jehovah's presence and blessing was to be fixed in a central and permanent abode. The first attempt to remove the ark had indeed miscarried, and the death of Uzzah, on that occasion, had filled the heart even of David with dismay; he feared to bring the symbol of so awful a presence to his city. But the blessing which had descended on the house of Obed-Edom, during the three months for which the ark remained there, reassured him. His purpose, so hastily broken off by the judgment upon Uzzah, was resumed; and king and priests and people, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands (1 Chron. xv. 2), in solemn procession, and with all the accompaniments of music and song, conducted the ark to its resting-place on the holy mountain. It was then that this majestic anthem rose to heaven: "Jehovah's is the earth, and the fulness thereof"; and the gates of that gray old fortress were bid to lift themselves up, as being too narrow to admit the King of Glory.

It seems quite evident that the Psalm was intended to be sung in antiphonal measure, voice answering to voice, and chorus to chorus. Seven choirs of singers and musicians, so Josephus tells us, preceded the ark on this occasion, as the king commanded, he himself playing upon the harp, and dancing before Jehovah with all his might.

We may suppose the whole congregation, as they wound in festal procession up the sacred hill, to have begun the solemn strain: "Jehovah's is the earth, and the fulness thereof," etc. (ver. 1, 2). Then one

choir, or it may have been only a single voice, asked the question in verse 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?" etc., and was answered by another choir, or another voice, in verse 4, "He that is clean of hands," etc.; whilst both finally united in verses 5, 6, "He shall receive a blessing," etc. After this prelude the singing ceased for a time (as the *Selah* seems to indicate), and the musical instruments only were heard. In the second part, a band of priests and Levites heading the procession have already passed within the gates, as representatives of the holy nation. And whilst the rest of the vast assembly, as it still ascends, bursts forth with the magnificent choral hymn, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," etc., the company from within reply, "Who is the King of Glory?" who thus demands admittance; and again the answer peals back from the choir without, as with a voice of many waters, "Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of Glory."

There is no reason to conclude, with Ewald, that in this Psalm the fragments of two ancient compositions have been united. The opening of the Psalm, which claims for Jehovah universal dominion, is quite in keeping with its close. The feeling thus expressed is remarkably characteristic of the great Hebrew poets and prophets. Jehovah is to them, indeed, the covenant God of Israel, but he is also the Lord of heaven and earth. And the verses which declare the character of his true worshippers were not only most fitting at such a season, but may perhaps have been suggested by the death of Uzzah, or, at any rate, would have received a force of sanction from that event, which reminded all who witnessed it, in so awful a manner, of the holiness of him who had stooped to make his dwelling among them.

The Psalm, then, consists of two principal divisions:

I. The preparation for the entry of Jehovah into his holy mountain (ver. 1-6).

II. The entry itself (ver. 7-10).

### [A Psalm of David.]

I. 1 JEHOVAH'S is the earth, and the fulness thereof;  
The world, and they that dwell therein;

1, 2. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is also Creator of the world, and therefore, of right, Lord of the world and all its inhabitants. He is no merely local or national deity, like the gods of the heathen (see the same idea, xxxiii., and comp. l. 12; lxxxix. 11 [12]; see also Jonah i. 9, and Isa. xxxvii. 16); the more marvellous therefore, and the more worthy to be praised, are his condescension and grace in having chosen Zion for his dwelling-place.

- 2 For HE hath founded it upon (the) seas,  
And upon (the) streams doth he make it fast.
- 3 "Who shall ascend into the mountain of Jehovah?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?"
- 4 "He that is clean of hands and pure of heart,  
Who hath not lifted up his soul<sup>a</sup> unto vanity,  
And hath not sworn deceitfully."
- 5 "He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,  
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 This is the generation of them that worship him,  
That seek thy face, [O God of] Jacob!" [Selah.]

2. SEAS . . . STREAMS. The reference is, no doubt, to the account of the creation, in Genesis; the dry land having emerged from the water, and seeming to rest upon it. (Comp. cxxxvi. 6; Prov. viii. 29.) It would, however, be quite out of place to suppose that in such language we have the expression of any theory, whether popular or scientific, as to the structure of the earth's surface: Job says (xxvi. 7), "He hangeth the earth upon nothing." Such expressions are manifestly poetical. (See Job xxxviii. 6.)

It may be mentioned as a curiosity of Romish interpretation, that the Vulgate *super maria*, "upon the seas," was converted into *super Maria*, "upon (the Virgin) Mary." (See Selnecker's Commentary as referred to in Delitzsch.

3-6. The moral conditions which are necessary for all true approach to God in his sanctuary. The Psalm passes as usual from the general to the particular, from God's relation to all mankind as their Creator, to his especial relation to his chosen people in the midst of whom he has manifested his presence. The *Almighty* God is also the *Holy* God. His people therefore must be holy. This part of the Psalm is almost a repetition of Ps. xv. 1, etc. See also Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15.

4. UNTO VANITY, i.e. either (1) the perishing things of earth, Job xv. 31;

or (2) falsehood, Job xxxi. 5, which signification passes over into a wider one of moral evil in general, cxix. 37; or (3) false gods, idols, xxxi. 6 [7]. It may be taken here in the widest sense of all that the human heart puts in the place of God.

5. We are here told in other words (as at the close of Ps. xv.) who is thus worthy to enter the holy place.

A BLESSING, such as Abraham's seed might look for (Gen. xv. 6).

RIGHTEOUSNESS, not in the New Testament sense of justification, but in the Old Testament acceptance of inward and outward holiness; but still even this regarded as a *gift* from the God of his *salvation*. For this connection between *salvation* and *righteousness*, see the note on lxxiv. 15, and cf. cxxxii. 9, 16, and especially the prophecy of Isaiah, xlv. 22, 24; xlv. 13; l. 5; lvi. 1.

6. THIS IS THE GENERATION OF THEM, i.e. Such are they, this is their character.

As the text at present stands, in the Heb., "That seek thy face, Jacob," the only way of explaining it is by taking the word "Jacob" as in apposition with the generation that seek thy face." The meaning would then be, "This is the generation that inquire after God, and seek his face, viz. Jacob," i.e. the true Israel, those who worship in spirit and in truth. But this seems harsh, and the word אֱלֹהֵי may have slipped out of the



II. 7 "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
That the King of Glory may come in."

8 "Who, then,<sup>b</sup> is the King of Glory ?"

"Jehovah, strong and mighty ;  
Jehovah, mighty in battle."

9 "Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors,  
That the King of Glory may come in !"

10 "Who, then, is that King of Glory ?"

"Jehovah of Hosts,  
He is the King of Glory." [Selah.]

text, as may be inferred from the renderings of the LXX and Syriac. I have therefore adopted this view.

7-10. The entry of Jehovah as King of Glory into his sanctuary. The festal procession has now reached the gates of the city of Zion. "The singers go before; the minstrels follow after"; and in the midst of these is the ark, "whose name is called by the name of the Lord of Hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubim" (2 Sam. vi. 2); so that the entry of the ark is the entry of Jehovah himself into Zion (Num. x. 35). By a sublime figure, the poet bids the everlasting gates" of that gray old fortress be lifted up; for the greatest and most glorious of all kings is he who now enters in to claim it for himself. David had taken the stronghold from the hands of the Jebusites. But not David, but

Jehovah, is the true King of Zion. The gates are termed "gates of old," or "everlasting," as being of a hoar antiquity, possibly also with the hopeful anticipation that they would abide for ever.

This Psalm is no doubt prophetic, or rather typical, in its character. It has been appointed by the church as one of the Psalms for Ascension Day; and most fitly, in its Christian application, celebrates the return of Christ as the King of Glory to his heavenly throne, and the inauguration of that dominion which he thence exercises in the world. It will be fully accomplished when the doors of all hearts, all temples, and all kingdoms shall be thrown wide before him; when he shall be acknowledged upon earth as he is acknowledged in heaven.

<sup>a</sup> The reading fluctuates between נִפְשִׁי and נַפְשִׁי. The former has been supposed by some of the rabbinical commentators to be equivalent to the personal pronoun אֲנִי, referring to God (cf. Jer. l. 14; Amos vi. 8), or rather to be equivalent to שְׁמִי in Ex. xx. 7, where the same phrase נָשָׂא לְשִׁמִּי occurs. But such an expression as "who hath not taken up me, or my soul, in vain," spoken of God, would be extremely harsh; and, moreover, God is nowhere introduced in the Psalm as speaking in the first person.

<sup>b</sup> הַי, not “Who is this,” etc.; but הַי is employed adverbially in interrogations, as making the interrogation more emphatic. German, *Wer denn?* In a still stronger form below, ver. 10, מִי הוּא זֶה. Cf. Jer. xxx. 21. So again in 1 Kings xviii. 7, “Is it thou (not as in E. V., Art thou that), my lord Elijah?”

## PSALM XXV.

THIS is an acrostic or alphabetical Psalm, the first verse beginning with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the other letters following in order at the beginning of each successive verse. The order is not perfectly observed; for, according to the present text, the second verse begins with א, Aleph, instead of ב, Beth; the letter ו, Vau, is altogether omitted; ר, Resh, is repeated ver. 18, 19, whereas the former verse should have begun with ק, Koph. And a last verse, added to make up the number 22, commences with פ, Pe. This peculiarity, as well as the omission of ו, Vau, in its proper place, occurs also in the thirty-fourth, another alphabetical Psalm. Indeed, the last verse of these two Psalms not only begins with the same letter, but with the same *word*, פָּדָה, “redeem.” Here the prayer is that God would *redeem* Israel; there it is said that he *redeems* the souls of his servants. This looks like design. It would seem to indicate that the same person was author of both poems, and that the condition of the people was the same at the time they were written. We have no means of fixing what that time was, but they probably both belong to the later period of the history — perhaps to the time of the exile. Other Psalms which are constructed on a similar principle are the thirty-seventh, the one hundred and eleventh, one hundred and twelfth, one hundred and nineteenth, and one hundred and forty-fifth. The general character of all these Psalms is didactic; and it is probable that this artificial arrangement was intended to be an assistance to the memory.

The Psalm hardly admits of formal division. It is a prayer for instruction and forgiveness.

The recurrence of certain expressions, such as “waiting” and “being ashamed” (ver. 2, 3, 5, 20, 21); “affliction” and “afflicted” (ver. 9 *bis*, 16, 18); the prayer for “instruction” (ver. 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14), together with earnest entreaty for “forgiveness” (ver. 7, 11, 18), gives

a peculiar character to the Psalm. Its prevailing thought is that God is the teacher of the afflicted, and the guide of the erring; and this is constantly repeated, either in the way of statement or of prayer.

[(A Psalm) of David.]

I. 1 א UNTO thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.

2 א O my God, in thee have I trusted;

Let me not be ashamed,

Let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 א Yea, none that wait<sup>a</sup> on thee shall be ashamed;

They shall be ashamed who are faithless<sup>b</sup> without cause.<sup>c</sup>

4 ה Thy ways, O Jehovah, make me to know;

Teach me thy paths:

5 ה Lead me in thy truth, and teach me;

For thou art the God of my salvation:

On thee<sup>d</sup> do I wait all the day.

6 ו Remember thy tender mercies, O Jehovah, and thy loving-kindnesses,

For they have been ever of old.

1. UNTO THEE; emphat., not to any false god, or to any human deliverer. Similarly verse 2, 5.

2. This verse begins with an א instead of a ה, as it should do, according to the acrostic arrangement. Possibly the first two words of the verse have been transposed. At any rate we must not (with Ewald and others) refer אלהי to the former verse.

3. The writer passes from the optative with א (μή), verse 2, to the future with א (οὐ). He here expresses not so much a general truth as his own individual conviction, and includes, tacitly, himself in the number of those who thus hope. The LXX are mistaken in returning, in the second clause of the verse, to the optative. For the sentiment, cf. Rom. v. 5, ἡ δὲ ἐλπίς οὐ κατασχύνει.

5. LEAD ME IN THY TRUTH; more lit. "Cause me to walk in thy truth," i.e.

let me ever live in the experience of it, that I may not be like the faithless ones who are put to shame. So Calvin: "Postulat ut Deus servum in fide promissionum retineat, i.e. sibi patefieri quam verax et fidelis Deus sit in promissis suis, promissa Dei penitus cordi suo insculpi." Rightly, for the Hebrew word here employed means *truth* not as apprehended by man, but as an attribute of God. Comp. xxvi. 3; lxxxvi. 11.

6. Comp. Gen. viii. 1; ix. 15; xix. 29, etc. An appeal to the unchangeableness of God's nature, as well as a calling to mind of past mercies. But sin is that which shuts out God's mercy, and hence the prayer for forgiveness in the next verse.

6, 7. "Tender mercies," "loving-kindnesses," "loving-kindness," "goodness." How the soul dwells on these attributes of God, and cleaves to them

7 **ה** The sins of my youth and my transgressions remember not ;

According to thy loving-kindness remember THOU me,  
For thy goodness' sake, O Jehovah.

II. 8 **ב** Good and upright is Jehovah,  
Therefore doth he teach sinners in the way.

9 **א** He leadeth<sup>e</sup> the afflicted in judgment,  
And teacheth the afflicted his way !

10 **ב** All the paths of Jehovah are loving-kindness and truth,  
To them that keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 **ב** For thy name's sake, O Jehovah,  
Pardon<sup>f</sup> mine iniquity, for it is great.

12 **מ** What man is he that feareth Jehovah ?  
Him doth he teach the way that he should choose.

13 **ב** His soul shall dwell at ease,  
And his seed shall inherit the land.

14 **ב** The secret<sup>g</sup> of Jehovah is for them that fear him,  
And his covenant doth he make them know.

15 **ב** Mine eyes are ever towards Jehovah,  
For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

when it is troubled with the sad recollection of "the sins of its youth," and its "transgressions!"

8, 9. Again an appeal to God's attributes as the ground of his dealings with man.

8. SINNERS ; here apparently with reference to the etymology of the word, those that "have erred and strayed" from the way.

9. THE AFFLICTED, see on ix. 12.

10. LOVING-KINDNESS (or grace) AND TRUTH, the *χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια* of John i. 17. These paths — the ways in which he leads his people — "are loving-kindness, for the salvation of men is the end thereof, and truth, for they give proof at every step of the certainty of his promises. Grace is their Alpha, and truth their Omega." — *Delitzsch*.

11. Again a prayer for forgiveness,

that the grace and truth (ver. 10) may be manifested to his soul. The mention of the keeping of the covenant (ver. 10) suggests the thought of manifold failure, and the consequent need of pardon.

12. WHAT MAN IS HE? or simply, "Whosoever he is that feareth," etc.; see xxxiv. 12 [13].

THE WAY THAT HE SHOULD CHOOSE ; i.e. the best way. So Luther (whom Ewald follows), *den besten Weg*.

13. SHALL DWELL ; lit. "pass the night," but used in the more extended sense, as in xlix. 12 [13] ; xci. 1 ; Prov. xix. 23.

AT EASE ; lit. "in prosperity."

SHALL INHERIT THE LAND. Cf. Ex. xx. 12 ; Lev. xxvi. 3 ; Deut. iv. 1, etc.

14. SECRET. As God said (Gen. xviii. 17), "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Or the word may



- 16 ט Turn thee to me, and be gracious unto me,  
For I am desolate and afflicted.
- 17 צ My heart is (full of) troubles : O set it at liberty,<sup>h</sup>  
And out of my distresses deliver thou me.
- 18 ר Look upon my affliction and my trouble,  
And forgive all my sins.
- 19 ר Look upon mine enemies ; for they are many,  
And they hate me with cruel hatred.
- 20 ש Keep my soul, and deliver me.  
Let me not be ashamed ; for I trust in thee.
- 21 ה Let perfectness and uprightness defend me ;  
For I wait on thee.
- 22 פ Redeem Israel, O God,  
Out of all his troubles.

mean "close and intimate communion," in which God makes himself known to the soul. See lv. 14 [15] ; Prov. iii. 22 ; Job xxix. 4. God alone possesses the truth, for he is the truth, and therefore he alone can impart it, and he imparts it only to them that fear him.

22. This last verse, which contains a prayer for the whole congregation, was perhaps, added in order to adapt the Psalm to liturgical use. (Cf. li. 18, 19 [20, 21].) The name of God is here Elohim, whereas throughout the rest of the Psalm it is Jehovah.

<sup>a</sup> כִּנְיָהּ. Part. Kal (the fin. verb being Piel), occurring, however, only in st. constr. or with suff., which seems to rest on the constr. of the verb with the accus. (ver. 5, 21), as well as with כִּי, or rather, perhaps, on the affinity between the part. and the noun. Sim. קָם is more common in plur. with suff. than with the prep. עַל, which the verb requires.

<sup>b</sup> הַבֹּגְדִים. LXX, οἱ ἀνομοῦντες διακενής ; Aq., οἱ ἀθετοῦντες ; Sym., οἱ ἀθ. ἐκῆ ; S', ἀποστατοῦντες. בֹּגֵד, "one who acts treacherously," whether against God (lxxviii. 57 ; Jer. iii. 20, etc.) or man (Judges ix. 23 ; Job vi. 5 ; Mal. ii. 14, etc.), often opp. in the Proverbs, to צַדִּיק, and rendered by the LXX παράνομος, used by the prophets of plunderers and oppressors (Isa. xxi. 2 ; xxiv. 16 ; Hab. i. 13).

<sup>c</sup> רִיקָם, either "without cause," or, as qualifying the preceding word, "vainly, emptily." Cf. בֹּגֵדִי אֶנָּה, lix. 6 ; שָׁטִי קֶזֶב, xl. 5. So Luther, *die losen Veärchter*.

<sup>d</sup> Some of Kennicott's and De Rossi's mss. read וַאֲיֹתָךְ, making a fresh verse begin here. This would restore the alphabetical arrangement

(see Introd. to the Psalm). The LXX, Syr., Arab., and Vulg. seem also to have had this reading.

<sup>e</sup> יִרְדֶּךָ, properly an optative, though nearly all commentators take it as fut. or pres. But the verse might very well be rendered as a prayer: "May he lead," etc.

<sup>f</sup> וְסִלַּחְתָּ. This is one of the most remarkable instances of the use of the pret. with Vau emphatic for the imperative. Usually where this is the case, an imperat. has gone before. But not so here; and this should have been noticed by Gesen. when he classed this amongst examples of the ordinary constr., § 124, 6. a.

<sup>g</sup> So Symm. renders *δουλία*; while Aq. has *ἀπόρρητον*, and Theod., *μυστήριον*. The LXX have *κραταίωμα*, as if they read וְסִיִּיר, instead of סִיִּיר. The second clause may be rendered in three ways: (1) "That he may make them know his covenant." (2) "And his covenant is for their instruction." (3) "And his covenant he doth (or will) make them know." The last rendering is in accordance with the not uncommon substitution of the inf. with לְ for the fut. Cf. Isa. xxi. 1; xxxviii. 20; Prov. ix. 8. Gesen. § 129, Rem. 1; and see on lxii. note <sup>g</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> הַרְחִיבֵי. The older translators generally have taken this in an intr. or pass. sense, as E. V. But the verb nowhere else occurs, except in a trans. sense. As the text now stands, we can only render, "Distresses have enlarged my heart," i.e. have made room for themselves, as it were, that they might come in and fill it; or have rushed in like a flood of water, swelling the stream till it overflows its banks, and so spreads itself over a wider surface. So Bakius: "Fecerunt latitudinem quaquaversum undiquaque, metaphora sumta ab aquis subito per omnes campos se diffundentibus." Unless, indeed, we take the word in the same meaning as in cxix. 32, where to enlarge the heart = to open it to instruction. But that sense is scarcely suitable here. Most modern editors read הַרְחִיבֵי וּמִמְצִיקָתִי (imperat.), instead of הַרְחִיבֵי מִי. The rendering then is: "My heart is troubles (i.e. is nothing but troubles, is full of troubles), oh set it at liberty! And out of my distresses," etc.

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## PSALM XXVI.

THIS Psalm has some points of resemblance, both in thought and expression, to the last. Both open with the same declaration of trust in God (xxv. 2, xxvi. 1); in both there is the same prayer that God would redeem (xxv. 22 and xxvi. 11) and be gracious (xxv. 16, xxvi.

11) to his servants. Other points of contact may be found in xxv. 21, xxvi. 11; xxv. 5, xxvi. 3. There is, however, this marked difference between the two — that there are wanting in this Psalm those touching confessions of sinfulness and pleadings for forgiveness which in the other are thrice repeated. Here is only the avowal of conscious uprightness,—an avowal solemnly made as in the sight of the Searcher of hearts, and deriving, no doubt, much of its intensity and almost impassioned force from the desire, on the part of the singer, to declare his entire separation from, and aversion to, the vain and evil men by whom he is surrounded.

The Psalm furnishes no direct evidence as to its date; but it may have been composed during Absalom's rebellion. His partisans may be especially hinted at in the "vain men" and "dissemblers" of ver. 4, who had only recently been unmasked; for Absalom, it is said, "had stolen the hearts of the men of Israel."

The Psalm scarcely admits of any strophical division. The flow of thought is natural and unbroken throughout. The singer begins by appealing to God as the witness of his sincerity and uprightness (ver. 1-3). He then passes on to state how this sincerity has manifested itself, in complete separation from the wicked, on the one hand (verse 4, 5); and on the other, by the love of God's house and worship (ver. 6-8). Hereupon follows, first, a prayer that he who is thus upright (ver. 11) should not be involved in the lot of the wicked, but, on the contrary, experience God's redeeming love and grace (ver. 9-11); and next, the confident sense of security, which is the very answer to his prayer, together with the resolve expressed, to declare, in the most public manner, his thankfulness to God (ver. 12).

[(A Psalm) of David].

1 JUDGE me, O Jehovah,

For I have walked in my integrity,

And in Jehovah have I trusted without wavering.<sup>a</sup>

2 Prove me, O Jehovah, and try me,

Purify<sup>b</sup> my reins and my heart:

1. JUDGE ME; i.e. vindicate my cause, so that my innocency may be made manifest; do me justice (as vii. 8 [9]; xxxv. 24).

INTEGRITY; not moral perfection, but uprightness of heart, conscious sincerity

of intention, is meant (see Gen. xx. 5; 1 Kings xxii. 34); and this, as resting on that unwavering trust in God which follows.

2. PROVE . . . PURIFY. Words used of the testing of metals, the last espe-

- 3 For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes,  
 And my conversation hath been in thy truth.  
 4 I have not sat with vain persons,  
 Neither do I go in with dissemblers ;  
 5 I hate the congregation of evil-doers,  
 And with the wicked do I not sit.  
 6 I wash my hands in innocency,  
 That so I may compass thine altar, O Jehovah,  
 7 To make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard,<sup>c</sup>  
 And to tell of all thy wondrous works.

cially of trying and refining them by means of smelting (xii. 6 [7] ; lxvi. 10). The REINS, as the seat of the lower animal passions ; the HEART, as comprising not only the higher affections, but also the will and the conscience. He thus desires to keep nothing back ; he will submit himself to the searching flame of the Great Refiner, that all dross of self-deception may be purged away.

3. This verse gives the reason for the foregoing prayer.

LOVING-KINDNESS . . . TRUTH. See above on xxv. 10.

MY CONVERSATION HATH BEEN ; lit. "I have walked to and fro in thy truth." The verb is used like the Hellen. *περιπατεῖν*, of the general conduct and behaviour.

We have here again those strong assertions of conscious innocence, united even with an appeal to the searching scrutiny of God himself, which we have noticed in other Psalms. (See xvii. 3 ; xviii. 20-24.) The explanations given on those passages will apply here. It is clear, on the one hand, that this is no Pharisaic boast. The trust in God, the eye fixed on his loving-kindness, the prayer to be proved and tried, could not proceed from a Pharisee. On the other hand, it must always be borne in mind, that the full depth and iniquity of sin was not disclosed to the saints of the Old Testament. Sin could only appear to be sin in all its blackness and malignity, when it was brought into the full light of the cross of Christ. And it is

only as any man grasps that cross, that he can bear to look into the pollution which cleaves to his nature.

4. VAIN PERSONS ; or, "men of vanity," as Job xi. 11. On this word "vanity" see note on xxiv. 4. It signifies all the emptiness of the creature apart from God, "the chaotic void of estrangement from God, the terrible Nay into which man perverts the divinely ordained Yea of his being."—*Delitzsch*.

6. I WASH MY HANDS. Here, of course, only a figurative expression, though the action itself was often symbolical (Deut. xxi. 6 ; Matt. xxvii. 24), after the fashion of the East, where it is common to address the eye as well as the ear. The figure is borrowed apparently from Ex. xxx. 17-21, where Aaron and his sons are commanded to wash their hands and feet, before they approach to do service at the altar.

THAT SO I MAY COMPASS. The form of the verb requires this rendering. It is the cohortative, not the simple future. It may, however, here be used rather in an optative sense : "And so may I compass—so may I not be considered unworthy to compass—thine altar." So Olshausen, who is followed by Delitzsch. This compassing, or going round the altar, was, it would seem from this passage, a part of the ritual of divine worship, and was performed with the accompaniment of music and singing, as may be gathered from the next verse. If so, it is remarkable that no such custom is provided for in the law, or alluded to in



- 8 Jehovah, I love the habitation of thine house,  
And the place where thy glory dwelleth.  
9 Gather not my soul with sinners,  
Nor my life with bloody men ;  
10 In whose hand are evil designs,  
And whose right hand is full of bribes ;  
11 Whilst as for me, in mine integrity do I walk :  
Redeem me and be gracious unto me.  
12 My foot standeth upon even ground :  
Among the congregations will I bless Jehovah.

the history. That the notice of such a custom should have been preserved in a Psalm may readily be accounted for, from the fact that the Psalms were most of them intended for liturgical use. But could David hope to be permitted thus to join with the priests and Levites in near approach to the altar? Delitzsch replies, that as the priests represented all Israel, whatever acts of worship they performed, each Israelite might be said to perform in them; and that thus David, having the priestly heart, might use also the priestly expression. But I am disposed to think that the whole passage is figurative, and amounts to this: 'I would fain give myself to thy service even as thy priests do,' just as in xxiii. 6 he utters the wish to dwell in the house of Jehovah forever.

8. I LOVE, etc., the antithesis to verse 5, "I hate the congregation of evil-doers."

9. Thus he would have God judge him (ver. 1), i.e. declare what he is, by separating him from the wicked.

11. Asserting again the integrity of his own character, in opposition to the violence and unscrupulousness of his enemies, he makes on this ground a fresh appeal to God for deliverance from their devices.

12. His prayer has been heard. He is safe. He stands on the open, level table-land, where he has room to move, and where his enemies cannot hem him in, and therefore he fulfils the resolve made before (ver. 7), and publicly pours out his thanksgivings to God.

<sup>a</sup> לֹא אֶמְצָא, a subjoined adverbial clause, "without being moved," like לֹא יִרֵעַ, xxxv. 8, and not a distinct and independent assertion.

<sup>b</sup> צְרוּפָה is the K'thibh, according to Isa. xxxii. 11. See also Judges ix. 8, 12; 1 Sam. xxviii. 8.

<sup>c</sup> לְהַשְׁמִיעַ for לְשַׁמֵּעַ. Cf. Isa. xxiii. 11. It may be here used without any object expressed, as in 1 Chron. xv. 19; 2 Chron. v. 13, "to sing aloud." It is perhaps better, however, to take בָּקוֹל as itself the object of the verb (for the construction with the prep., see Ezek. xxvii. 30), and to render, "to make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard."

## PSALM XXVII.

THIS Psalm, like the last, and the one which follows, may very probably be referred to the time of Absalom's rebellion. All alike are characterized by the affectionate remembrance of God's sanctuary, as of one who was debarred from the privilege of constant and uninterrupted access to it. This feeling, however, is most vivid, this yearning after the service and ordinances of his tabernacle is most intense, in this Psalm. It seems as if all other desires of the heart were concentrated and swallowed up in this one: "One thing have I desired." The feeling of calm, unshaken confidence in God, in the former part of the Psalm, reminds one of Psalm iii., which may undoubtedly be referred to the same circumstances.

The Psalm consists of two parts: The first (ver. 1-6) is an expression of the most assured confidence in Jehovah, whatever enemies may threaten. The second (ver. 7-14) is an earnest cry for help and comfort in present need, out of which the soul rises again to hopeful trust in God.

As still further subdivision we have, —

## I. The Psalmist's confidence in God:

- A 1. As his refuge against all fear (ver. 1);
- 2. As his protection in times past (ver. 2);
- 3. As his hope at all times.
- B Further expression of that confidence in the longing to abide ever in the house of Jehovah (ver. 4).
- 1. For there will he find safety (ver. 5);
- 2. And so may confidently hope for victory over his enemies (ver. 6).

## II. The Psalmists prayer in time of need:

- A Forsake me not!
- 1. For I plead thy word (ver. 8).
- 2. I am thy servant whom thou hast saved (ver. 9).
- 3. I am desolate and forsaken (ver. 10).
- B But deliver me,
- 1. By showing me thy way;
- 2. By saving me from my enemies.
- C I know in whom I have believed.

Therefore 1. My trust in him still supports me (ver. 13).

- 2. Let me trust him evermore.

## [A Psalm of David.]

I. 1 JEHOVAH is my light and my salvation :

Whom shall I fear ?

Jehovah is the defence of my life :

Of whom shall I be afraid ?

2 When the evil-doers came near unto me

To eat up my flesh —

My adversaries and mine enemies to (do) *me* (harm) —

*They* themselves stumbled and fell.

3 Though a host should encamp against me,

My heart will not be afraid :

Though there rise up war against me,

For all this, do I trust.

4 One thing have I asked of Jehovah ;

That will I seek after :

1-3. The fearlessness of the man who has made Jehovah his confidence.

1. MY LIGHT, MY SALVATION . . . THE DEFENCE (or bulwark) OF MY LIFE. This, says Calvin, is the triple shield which he opposes to all the different terrors which threaten him. MY LIGHT — the only instance of the direct application of this name to God in the Old Testament. But see xviii. 28 [29]; xxxvi. 9; lxxxiv. 11 [12]; and Deut. xxx 20, "He is thy life."

2. This verse may be regarded, with most commentators, as recording David's past experience of God's protection. Stier, however, sees in it the confidence of faith with regard to the present and the future; David being so sure of the defeat of his enemies that he speaks of it as already accomplished: "When mine enemies come upon me, etc., . . . they *have* stumbled and fallen," i.e. such is their inevitable fate.

TO EAT UP MY FLESH — an image taken from wild beasts; see Job xix. 22.

TO (DO) ME (HARM). The use of the pronoun here is not pleonastic, but emphatic, and is evidently put in immediate and designed opposition to the pron.

"they," referring to his enemies, which follows.

3. A HOST. Lit. "though a CAMP should encamp against me," but the English idiom would hardly admit of such a rendering.

FOR ALL THIS. So the same expression is rightly rendered in the E.V. of Lev. xxvi. 27. The fuller form occurs lxxviii. 32; Job i. 22. Cocc., rightly, *hoc non obstante*, "in spite of this," and Mendelssohn, "Auch dann bleib' ich getrost." The Rabbin. commentators, as Aben-Ezra and Rashi, explain, "In this," viz. "that the Lord is my light, etc. (ver. 1), "do I trust." Rosenmüller refers the pronoun "this" to the war mentioned just before, "even in the battle itself," *in ipsa pugna*. But the first rendering is more forcible.

4. Such happiness had he experienced in the service of God in his tabernacle, such peace and joy had he found there, that there, if it might have been, he would have chosen always to remain. For there God vouchsafed to dwell; there he manifested his immediate presence; there David seemed, as it were, to abide under the very shadow of the Almighty.

That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah

All the days of my life ;

To behold the beauty of Jehovah,

And to consider his temple.

5 For he shall conceal me in his tabernacle in the day of evil ;

He shall hide me in the hiding-place of his tent ;

On a rock shall he set me up on high.

6 And now shall my head be set up above mine enemies round about me :

So will I offer in his tent sacrifices of shouting,

So will I sing, yea I will make melody unto Jehovah.

The supreme blessedness of a life entirely devoted, like that of the priests, to the service of God, seems often to have forced itself upon the minds of the holy Psalmists (see xv. ; xxiii. ; lxv. ; lxxxiv., etc., and note on xxvi. 6), and upon none more than upon that of David, who was compelled so often to wander at a distance from the sanctuary. There is the same feeling here of the perfect security and abounding happiness of such a dwelling-place as in Psalm xxiii. 6. Indeed, the two Psalms have much in common.

BEAUTY, apparently with reference to the ordinances of the sanctuary, the worship as there conducted, etc. (So Luther: "Die schönen Gottesdienste des Herrn.") But of course not to be confined merely to the external glory of the tabernacle, but to be understood chiefly of that glory which is unveiled to the eye of faith. Others, however, explain the word here, as in xc. 17, in the sense of "kindness," "loving favor." (Delitzsch, "Freundlichkeit.") Our English word "favor" is perhaps the nearest equivalent to the Hebrew word, as expressing at once beauty of person E.V. of Prov. xxxi. 30) and kindness shown to others.

CONSIDER, "to look at a thing earnestly," "to mark," "survey it with care," etc., so as to take pleasure in it; see Lev. xiii. 36; Prov. xx. 25, and comp. Ps. xlviii. 12 [13], which expresses at

length the same thing. The LXX, ἐπισκέπτεσθαι τὸν ναὸν αὐτοῦ; E. V., "to inquire in his temple."

TEMPLE here, as is evident from what follows, applied to the tabernacle. (See note on Ps. v. 7.) But I have retained the word, as it is employed by our translators, in 1 Sam. iii. 3, to denote the building at Shiloh.

5. The tent or tabernacle here spoken of, was not the Mosaic tabernacle of the congregation — for that remained at Gibeon till Solomon removed it to the Temple (see 2 Chron. i. 3, 4) — but the tent which David erected for the ark, when he removed it to Zion (2 Sam. vi. 17).

Mr. George Grove has called my attention to "a curious progression in reference to the Temple here: (1) the house; (2) the sanctuary (?) הֵיכָל; (3) the סִד; (4) the tent; (5) the rock, protruding (?) from the floor, like the rock of the Sakrah at present, on which when David was mounted, he was out of reach, and could burst into a secure hurrah." He adds, "I wish we could get a good word for סִד."

6. SACRIFICES OF SHOUTING: a stronger form of expression than the usual "sacrifices of thanksgiving," and equivalent to "sacrifices accompanied with the loud and glad expression of thankfulness," with, perhaps, an allusion to Num. x. 10.



- II. 7 Hear, O Jehovah, when I cry with my voice,  
 Be gracious also unto me and answer me.  
 8 To thee hath my heart said : " Seek ye my face "—  
 " Thy face, Jehovah, will I seek."  
 9 Hide not thy face from me ;  
 Put not thy servant away in anger :  
 Thou hast been my help ; cast me not away,  
 Neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.  
 10 For my father and my mother (may) have forsaken me ;  
 But Jehovah taketh me up.  
 11 Teach me, O Jehovah, thy way,  
 And lead me in an even path,  
 Because of mine adversaries.  
 12 Give me not over into the will of mine oppressors ;  
 For false witnesses have risen up against me,  
 And they that breathe out a violence.

7. The triumphant strain of confidence now gives way to one of sad and earnest entreaty. Is it (as Calvin) that the Psalmist sought in the former part of the Psalm to comfort himself with the review of God's unfailing strength and protection, that he might with the more reason utter his prayer for help ? Or is it not rather, that even whilst he is thus strengthening himself in his God, a sudden blast of temptation sweeps over his soul, freezing the current of life,—some fear lest he should be forsaken, some thought of the craft and malice of his enemies,—till now the danger which threatens him is as prominent an object as the salvation and defence were before ?

8. The words *SEEK YE MY FACE* are the words of God, which the servant of God here, as it were, takes from his mouth, that so laying them before God, he may make his appeal the more irresistible. Thou hast said, " Seek ye my face " : my heart makes those words its own, and builds upon them its resolve. It takes them up, and repeats them : " Seek ye my face." It first claims thus thine own gracious words, O Lord, and then its echo to those words is, " Thy

face, Lord, will I seek." Such is the soul's dialogue with itself, when it would comfort itself in God. We are reminded of that touching scene in the gospel history, where another, a woman of Canaan, in like manner overcomes the Saviour with his own words : " Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs," etc.

10. Some have supposed that the allusion in this verse is to the time of Saul's persecution, when David was compelled to separate from his parents, and leave them under the protection of the king of Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3). But, as Delitzsch observes, he left them, not they him. It is better therefore to understand the expression hypothetically : "(though) my father and my mother may have forsaken me," i.e. though my condition be helpless and friendless as that of a child deserted of his parents, there is one who watches over me and will take me to his bosom. See Isa. lxiii. 16 ; xlix. 15. The phrase has, as DeWette says, somewhat of a proverbial character.

*TAKETH ME UP.* The verb is here used in the same sense as in Deut. xxii. 2 ; Josh. xx. 4, " receives me under his

13 Oh did I not <sup>b</sup> believe to see the goodness of Jehovah  
In the land of the living!

14 Wait on Jehovah,  
Be of good courage, and let thine heart be strong;  
Wait, I say, on Jehovah.

care and protection," or, perhaps, as Stier suggests, "adopts me as his child"; see xxii. 10 [11].

13. An instance of aposiopesis. Our version gives the sense very well in supplying "I had fainted"; but the words refer to the present, not to the past. The

holy singer feels now, at this moment, when the false and violent men are before his mind, how helpless he would be, did he not trust and hope in his God: "There were an end of me—or, what would become of me, did I not believe," etc.

<sup>a</sup> יִפְּחַ, stat. constr. of a verbal adjective, יִפְּחַ (= יִפְּחֶה), and formed undoubtedly from the future of the verb. The plural does not occur. The sing. is here used in a collective sense.

<sup>b</sup> לִיגֵלָא. See similar instances of aposiopesis with an omitted apodosis after לִי, Gen. i. 15, and after לִיגֵלִי, with the apodosis introduced with כִּי, Gen. xxxi. 42; xliii. 10; 1 Sam. xxv. 34; 2 Sam. ii. 27; and see also Num. xxii. 33. The preterite after לִיגֵלָא may have either a pluperfect meaning, as Gen. xliii. 10; Psalm cxxiv. 1, or an imperf., as Deut. xxxii. 29, where an imperf. (fut.) follows, and so here.

## PSALM XXVIII.

AFTER earnestly beseeching God to hear him (ver. 1, 2), the Psalmist prays that he may not be involved in the evil doings of the wicked (ver. 3); and that they may receive righteous punishment (ver. 4, 5). He thanks God that he has heard his prayer (ver. 6, 7), and acknowledging him as the Saviour both of king and people (ver. 8), entreats him to help and bless and feed his heritage for ever (ver. 9).

The structure of the Psalm is based on the common principle of dipodia, or strophes of two verses; the only exception being in the central one, which consists of three verses.

Hitzig thinks that Jeremiah, and Ewald suggests that Josiah, may have been the author of the Psalm. But these are guesses which have little to recommend them; and there is no valid reason why we should reject the traditional title, which gives the Psalm to David. Like the

two preceding Psalms, it might very well have been composed at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Verses 2 and 3 bear a close resemblance to xxvi. 8, 9.

[A Psalm of David.]

- 1 To thee, O Jehovah, do I cry ;  
O my rock, hold not thy peace from me !  
Lest, if thou be silent from me,  
I become like <sup>a</sup> them that go down into the pit.
- 2 Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to thee,  
When I lift up my hands toward the innermost place <sup>b</sup>  
of thy sanctuary.
- 3 Draw me not away with the wicked,  
And with the workers of iniquity ;  
Who speak peace with their neighbors,  
But wickedness is in their hearts.
- 4 Give them according to their work,  
And according to the wickedness of their doings ;  
According to the operation of their hands give them,—  
Requite them that they have deserved ;

1, 2. The earnestness of the cry is to be measured not only by the greatness of the peril which threatened, but by the faith which cleaves to God, knowing that in *him only* is there help. **HOLD NOT THY PEACE FROM ME ; IF THOU BE SILENT** (or dumb) **FROM ME.** The prep. in both cases, used with something of a pregnant meaning, = "Turn not away from me in silence." The expression is often applied to God, with reference to prayer which seems to remain unanswered ; see xxxv. 22 ; xxxix. 12 [13] ; lxxxiii. 1 [2] ; cix. 1, etc., for the one verb ; and Isa. lxii. 1, 6 ; lxiv. 12 [Heb. 11], for the other.

3. **DRAW ME NOT AWAY ;** viz. to destruction with them, as in Ezek. xxxii. 20. See also Job xxiv. 22. The same sentiment above, xxvi. 9.

**WHO SPEAK PEACE,** etc. Perhaps the same as the "dissemblers," in xxvi. 4. We might almost suppose a reference to the arts by which Absalom secretly un-

dermined David's authority, and "stole away the heart's of the people, before he broke out into open rebellion. But the prayer which follows in the next verse David would not have offered against Absalom. The aiders and abettors of the rebellion may, however, have been in his mind.

4. The second petition is for the destruction of his enemies, as the first was for his own preservation.

**GIVE THEM :** of a judicial act (Hos. ix. 14). With the language of this and the next verse, comp. Isa. i. 16 ; iii. 8-11 ; v. 19. I have spoken elsewhere of these prayers for vengeance upon the wicked which sometimes meet us in the Psalms. (See note at the end of Psalm xxxv.) In this instance certainly there is no trace of the expression of personal animosity and the mere desire of revenge. It is rather an appeal to God's justice to deal with the righteous and the wicked according to their deserts. See Calvin's

- 5 For they have no regard to the works of Jehovah,  
Nor to the operation of his hands :  
(Therefore) shall he destroy them, and not build them up.
- 6 Blessed be Jehovah,  
For he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
- 7 Jehovah is my strength and my shield ;  
In him hath my heart trusted, and I am helped ;  
Therefore doth my heart exult,  
And with my song will I praise him.
- 8 Jehovah is their strength,  
And he is the saving defence of his anointed.
- 9 O save thy people and bless thine inheritance :  
Feed them also, and bear them up for ever.

excellent remarks upon the passage, who warns us against praying for the destruction of the wicked, unless we can first lay aside all passionate and vindictive feelings.

5. The reason why God's judgment should overtake the wicked, not their malice against the Psalmist, but their disregard of the Most High. See x. 4, and Isa. v. 12, 19. The works of Jehovah, and the operation of his hands, are in manifest opposition to those of the wicked in verse 4.

SHALL HE DESTROY. Thus the Psalmist's prayer passes into the expression of confidence that God will so deal with them ; a confidence based upon the very attributes of God. And thus the way is paved for the thanksgiving which immediately follows.

6. In his own heart he has already received the answer to his prayer. He knows that God will fulfil his petitions, and therefore breaks out, in the glad certainty of faith, "Blessed be Jehovah," etc. The certainty that prayer is heard anticipates its visible fulfilment.

7. The two preterites mark that the *trust* and the *help* belong to one and the

same time, whilst the *joy* which follows from the help is expressed by the verb in the fut. consec., which here may be = a present (as in Job xiv. 2). All three verbs may, however, be rendered strictly as perfects.

WITH MY SONG ; lit. *out of* my song ; the song being, as it were, the source from which the praise flowed.

8. THEIR STRENGTH ; the pron. thus emphatically mentioned before the word "people," to which it refers in the last verse. See a similar instance in ix. 12 [13] ; lxxxvii. 1.

First the people, then himself their monarch ; but not David the man, but David the king, as anointed of God, and chosen to feed his people.

9. Thy PEOPLE, thine INHERITANCE. In those words are his plea with God. It is impossible not to see, in these tender, loving words, "feed them and bear them," the heart of the shepherd-king." Feed them, O thou true Shepherd of Israel (lxxx. 1 [2]) ; bear them, carry them in thine arms (Isa. lxiii. 9 ; xl. 11). Perhaps the reference may be to Deut. i. 31 ; xxxii. 11. Compare with this the conclusion of Psalm iii.

יְהוָה מִלְּחָמָה. This depends on מָלַךְ, although the accent is on the penultimate, not on the last syllable, which is its proper accentuation as *perf.*



*consec.* following the *future*. There are, however, occasional exceptions to this rule (see Prov. xxx. 9; Deut. viii. 12–14), so that this need not have been classed as a license by Ewald, § 234 *c*. It is to be explained on a principle of attraction, the second clause being, as is usual in Hebrew, co-ordinate with, instead of being subordinated to, the first (comp. xxvii. 10). The *perf.* marks the consequence which then *would take place* if the condition implied in the previous future were fulfilled (e.g. Gen. iii. 22; Isa. vi. 10). This is especially the constr. where the conditional clause is repeated. See Ex. xxxiv. 12–15; Josh. vi. 18; Deut. xxv. 3. The following are the constructions of *וְ* when a sentence of more than one member depends upon it; (1) *fut.* and *perf.*, the last either with the tone of the *perf. consec.*, as for instance, Ex. xxxiv. 15, or without it, as here, and in the examples given above. (2) *fut.* and *fut.* as ii. 12; Jer. li. 46; Deut. xx. 6, in which case the second future denotes a consequence immediately springing from the first, the first being assumed as certain. (3) *fut.* and *perf.* without *Vau consec.* (4) Even *perf.* and *fut. consec.*, as 2 Kings ii. 16.

<sup>b</sup> *הַבַּיִת*. Elsewhere only in the books of Kings and Chronicles. (See 1 Kings vi. 5, 19–22; 2 Chron. iii. 16; iv. 20, etc.) The adytum, or innermost part of the sanctuary, where was the ark of the covenant; not, however, so called because thence answers and oracles were given, as if from the root *הָבַר*, as the Rabbins explain, and as Aq. and Symm. render *αρχηγοματιστήριον*, and Jerome, *oraculum*; but connected no doubt with the Arab. *طبر*, *pone fuit*, *طَبَرٌ*, *pars postica*. Hence also the Talmud, *בְּרִיבָר*, “behind.”

## PSALM XXIX.

THIS Psalm is a magnificent description of a thunder-storm. Its mighty march from north to south, the desolation and terror which it causes, the peal of the thunder, the flash of the lightning, even the gathering fury and lull of the elements, are vividly depicted.

The Psalm consists of five parts; a prelude, the body of the poem in three divisions, and a conclusion. The structure<sup>1</sup> of the whole is highly artificial, and elaborated with a symmetry of which no more perfect specimen exists in Hebrew. But this evidently artificial mode of

<sup>1</sup> This was first fully explained by Ewald in his *Jahrbücher*, viii. 68–73, to whose masterly analysis I am here indebted.

composition is no check to the force and fire of the poet's genius, which kindles and glows and sweeps along with all the freedom and majesty of the storm; the whole Psalm being one continued strain of triumphant exultation.

I. In the prelude, the singer lifts our thoughts at once from earth to heaven, by calling on the angels who stand around the throne of God to praise him who manifests his glory in the thunder and lightning which he sends upon the earth (ver. 1, 2).

II. Then follows the description of the storm in the three strophes which constitute the main body of the poem. These are so constructed, that the first (ver. 3, 4) gives us the beginning of the storm, the low, faint, muttering thunder in the distant heavens; the next (ver. 5-7) describes the storm at its height, when it crashes the cedars, and shakes the mountains; the last (ver. 8, 9) tells how it passes on over the plain country to the forest of Kadesh in the south, where it dies away.

But not only the arrangement of the three strophes, but the structure of each separate strophe, contributes in a very striking degree to the whole effect of the poem. Each consists of five members, and each begins with a fresh burst, and closes with a lull in the tempest.

i. Thus, in the first strophe, we hear the first, yet distant, sound of the thunder in the words: "The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters." In the next two clauses: "The God of glory thundereth; Jehovah is upon many waters," the long, loud peal grows more distinct, whilst verse 4 again is pitched in a lower key, as if telling us of a pause in the storm.

ii. In the next strophe we have again, (a) first, the renewed fury of the tempest, as, coming nearer yet, it falls on the glory of Lebanon, and breaks her cedars in its might: "The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars," etc. (b) Next, gathering with a wilder intensity of wrath, it bursts upon the mountain peaks, roaring amid their rocks and shattering them, and making the everlasting hills themselves to tremble as with the throes of an earthquake, so that "Lebanon and Sirion skip like young buffaloes." (c) Lastly, we hear it sinking down in the line which describes the flashing of the forked lightning: "The voice of Jehovah cleaveth the flames of fire" (ver. 5-7).

iii. Again the same structure is observable. One long peal after another has rolled and reverberated along the sky, and now the storm, in its jubilant strength, sweeps the whole land from north to south. (a) Again it is up in its majesty: "The voice of Jehovah maketh the wilderness to tremble." (b) Again its last fury is poured out upon the wilderness of Kadesh. The very hinds bow themselves in travail-

pangs, and the forest is torn open and laid bare, as the hurricane drives through it in its path. (c) And again the tempest is stilled; but this time its voice is hushed and lost forever in the music and songs of the heavenly host: "In his temple all that are therein cry, Glory" (ver. 8, 9).

III. The conclusion consists, like the prelude, of two verses, each of two members. And here we are beautifully reminded that Jehovah, whom the angels praise, and who both *rules* and *stills* the elements in their wildest uproar, is the same Jehovah who gives *strength* and *peace* to his people (ver. 10, 11).

It is further observable, in proof of the evidently artificial structure of the whole, that each of the three central strophes has the same characteristic double line:

- (1) The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters,  
Jehovah is upon many waters.
- (2) The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars,  
Yea Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
- (3) The voice of Jehovah maketh the wilderness to tremble,  
Jehovah maketh the wilderness of Kadesh to tremble

In each of these instances, we have first, "the voice of Jehovah," and then, "Jehovah," and in each the second line is an amplification or strengthening of the first. It is further to be noticed that the expression, "voice of Jehovah," occurs *seven* times in the *three* principal divisions of the Psalm, thus reminding us of the ἑπτὰ βρονταί, "the seven thunders," of the Apocalypse.

According to the tradition preserved in the inscription of the LXX, ἑξοδίου (al. ἐξόδου) σκηνῆς, it would seem that in the second Temple this Psalm was sung on the Shemini Azereth, the last day (ἐξόδου Lev. xxiii. 36) of the Feast of Tabernacles. In the modern synagogue, however, this Psalm stands in the Jewish liturgy, to be used on the first day of Pentecost (Shebuoth).

#### [A Psalm of David.]

- 1 GIVE unto Jehovah, O ye sons of God,<sup>a</sup>  
Give unto Jehovah glory and strength.
- 2 Give unto Jehovah the glory due to his name.  
Worship Jehovah in holy vestments.

1. SONS OF GOD; or, perhaps, simply more fully discussed in the Critical "godlike ones," i.e. "the angels," so Note.  
2. IN HOLY VESTMENTS; heaven being called also in other passages. See this

- 3 The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters,  
 The God of glory thundereth;  
 Jehovah is upon many waters;
- 4 The voice of Jehovah is in might,  
 The voice of Jehovah is in majesty.
- 5 The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars,  
 Yea Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon;
- 6 And he maketh them to skip like a calf,  
 Lebanon and Sirion like the young of the wild ox:
- 7 The voice of Jehovah cleaveth the flames of fire.
- 8 The voice of Jehovah maketh the wilderness to tremble,  
 Jehovah maketh the wilderness of Kadesh to tremble.
- 9 The voice of Jehovah boweth the hinds in travail-pangs,  
 And strippeth the forests (of their leaves):  
 And in his temple all that are therein cry, "Glory."

thought of as one great temple, and all the worshippers therein as clothed in priestly garments, and doing perpetual service. In the earthly temple, in like manner, priests and Levites arrayed themselves on occasions of solemn pomp. Cf. 2 Chron. xx. 21, where E.V. has "beauty of holiness," Ps. cx. 3, where see note.

3. THE WATERS. This may either refer to the Mediterranean sea, from which the storm comes up (as J. D. Michaelis), or to "the waters above the firmament,"—the dense lowering masses of the storm-cloud charged with water. Probably the latter. See xviii. 11 [12].

4. IN MIGHT . . . IN MAJESTY. The attributes of God as displayed in the storm. The expression is more forcible than if adjectives denoting these qualities ("mighty," "majestic") had been used. Comp. *ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ*, Luke iv. 32: *ἐν ἰσχύϊ*, (rec.) Apoc. xviii. 2.

6. SIRION; i.e. Anti-Lebanon, acc. to Deut. iii. 9, the Sidonian name of Hermon. The force of the tempest bursts on these mountains, and is accompanied perhaps by an earthquake, though we

need not press what may be only a strong poetical figure.

7. With every thunder-peal comes the terrible forked lightning, so striking in tropical and Eastern lands. Its vivid, zigzag, serpent-like flash is given in a few words.

CLEAVETH THE FLAMES OF FIRE; i.e. parts the blaze of the lightning, so as to give it the forked appearance.

8. KADESH, in the south of Palestine, thus indicating the course taken by the storm. It sweeps the land from north to south. "The geographical notices of its situation," says Stanley, speaking of Kadesh, "are unfortunately too slight to be of much service. Yet thus much they fix, that it was 'in the Wilderness of Zin,' that it was 'on the edge of the border of Edom,' that it was near Mount Hor, that it was at the southern point to which the territory of Judah afterwards reached." He then gives reasons for identifying Kadesh with Petra. Traveling in the direction it did, the storm would first reach the 'Arabah, and then pass on to the acacias, and palms, and vegetation which clothe the rocks of



10 Jehovah sat throned above the flood :

Yea Jehovah sitteth throned a King forever.

11 Jehovah giveth strength to his people ;

Jehovah blesseth his people with peace.

sandstone in the neighborhood of Petra. See Stanley's interesting account of his journey in the opposite direction, from Petra to Palestine through the 'Arabah. (*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 94, etc.)

9. IN TRAVAIL-PANGS. This is a phenomenon which is also noticed and recorded as a fact by Arabian poets.

ALL THAT ARE THEREIN ; lit. "all of it."

10. FLOOD ; i.e. the Deluge. The word here employed occurs nowhere else, except in the story of the Flood (Gen. vi.-xi.), and therefore refers, I cannot help thinking, to that great act of judgment, and not merely to a recent inundation caused by the storm, the mountain-torrents having been swollen by the rain, and having flooded the country. This might have happened. But the selection of so peculiar a word (פְּבֹיֹל, "flood"), as well as the fact that the verb is in the past tense, "sat throned," makes the other more probable.

Very beautiful is the conclusion of the Psalm. If, in his heavenly temple

above, all that are therein ascribe "glory" to God, upon earth too he has manifested that glory. He sat as King when he sent the flood of water to destroy the earth. He sits now, and forever will sit, as King. As then he saved the righteous man from death, so now he watches over his people ; for Jehovah is the God of Israel. It was he who, when the storm waxed strong, gave it its strength ; it was he who, when it was hushed, spread over earth, and sea, and sky, the sweet sabbath stillness of peace. And he whose almighty power was seen in the march of the tempest, whose voice was heard in its wildest uproar, and whose word stilled its fiercest war, shall he not give both strength and peace ? Yea, Jehovah, who is strong and mighty, will give his own strength to his people. And he, who is the Prince of Peace, will bless his people with peace. Thus the Psalm begins, as Delitzsch says, with a *gloria in excelsis*, and ends with a *pax in terris*.

פְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן, "sons of God," not the mighty upon earth, as lxxxii. 6, but the *angels*, who are called elsewhere (as Job ii. 1) "sons of God." The word אֱלִים, however, is difficult, though it occurs in the same phrase, lxxxix. 7. It is never found by itself meaning "God," = אֱלֹהִים, but always "the gods," Ex. xv. 11 ; Dan. xi. 36. It would seem therefore as if the word "sons," were here used after the Hebrew idiom, somewhat vaguely : as פְּנֵי אֲבִיּוֹן, "sons of the poor," i.e. poor persons, so here פְּנֵי אֱלִים, "sons of the gods," may only mean, "godlike beings." The Chald. explains it "angels." The Syr. takes the words as the acc., and renders "young rams." The LXX and Vulg. curiously combine both interpretations. The former has ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ υἱοὶ θεοῦ, ἑ. τ. κ. υἱὸς κριῶν. The latter, *Afferte Domino, filii Dei, afferte Domino filios arietum*. Mendelssohn takes אֱלִים as = אֱלִילִים, and interprets, "sons of the great ones," in the sense of אֱלִילֵי מוֹאָב, the mighty men, or princes of Moab, Ex. xv. 15, and some mss. have here אֱלִילִים.

## PSALM XXX.

THIS Psalm was composed after recovery from a sickness which had very nearly proved fatal. The singer begins with an ascription of praise to God for his great goodness, and calls upon all who, like himself, had known the loving-kindness of Jehovah (יְהוָה), to join him in his thanksgiving. Thence he passes (ver. 6) to a recital of his own experience, his pleading with God in his affliction, and God's answer to his prayer.

According to the inscription, the Psalm was composed "at the dedication of the house." But what house? Some would understand the dedication of the spot on which the Temple afterwards stood, and which David purchased of Araunah (2 Sam. xxiv.; 1 Chron. xxi.) This spot, it is true, together with the altar erected there, might be called "the house of Jehovah" (as it is 1 Chron. xxii. 1), or absolutely "the house," even before the Temple was built. But if the Psalm were written for this occasion, it could not have been written by David, as he himself did not fall sick in the time of the pestilence (2 Sam. xxiv. 17).

Others conjecture that by "the dedication of the house" is meant a purification and reconsecration of David's palace which Absalom had defiled (2 Sam. xx. 3). But הִנָּח, "dedication," according to J. H. Michaelis, is only used of the original dedication of an object, never of its reconsecration. And besides, the Psalm speaks not of escape from enemies, but of recovery from sickness.

But perhaps, if the inscription is trustworthy, it refers to the house which David built in his new city of Zion, and the building of which he seems to have regarded as a pledge of the security and prosperity of his kingdom (2 Sam. v. 11, 12). We must, however, still suppose that he had suffered just before from a sickness about which the history is silent.

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions:

I. A thanksgiving on recovery (ver. 1-5).

(1) An ascription of praise (ver. 1). The reason, viz. that God had brought him back to life from the gates of death (ver. 2, 3).

(2) An exhortation to others to unite with him in praise. The reason, because God keepeth not his anger for ever (ver. 4, 5.)

II. A recital of the Psalmist's experience during his sickness (ver. 6-12).

(1) The sudden change by which he had been brought low (ver. 6, 7).

(2) His prayer in his sickness (ver. 8-10).

(3) The answer to his prayer, and thanksgiving thereupon (ver. 11, 12).

[A Psalm of David. A Song at the Dedication<sup>a</sup> of the House.]

- I. 1 I WILL extol thee, O Jehovah, for thou hast lifted me up,  
And hast not made mine enemies to rejoice over me.  
2 O Jehovah, my God,  
I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.  
3 O Jehovah, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave:  
Thou hast restored me to life, that I should not be of  
them that go down<sup>b</sup> into the pit.  
4 Sing praises unto Jehovah, O ye beloved of his,  
And give thanks to his holy name;  
5 For his anger is but for a moment,  
His favor for a life long:  
At even, weeping may come in for a night,  
But with the morning (is) a shout of joy.

I. Thanksgiving (ver. 1-5).

1. THOU HAST LIFTED ME UP; lit. "Thou hast drawn me up" (i.e. as a bucket is drawn up out of a well). It has been inferred from this expression that the Psalm was written by Jeremiah when he was taken up out of the dungeon. But this is turning poetry into prose. The word is clearly metaphorical.

4. BELOVED; more literally, "who have obtained mercy of him" (as Hupfeld); but see note on xvi. 10.

HIS HOLY NAME; lit. "His holy memorial," with reference, no doubt, to the passage (Ex. iii. 15), "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations." God's name is his revelation of himself, in all his various attributes of love, wisdom, power, holiness, truth, righteousness. God's memorial is that great history of redemption which was, so to speak, the setting up of a monument to his glory, on which all these attributes were inscribed.

5. A reason why God's saints should praise him — because he manifests himself to them in love, not in wrath; or if in wrath, but for a moment. Love rules

overall. The literal rendering of the verse is: "For in his anger is (but) a moment, in his favor a life; in the evening, weeping may come in to pass the night; but with the morning (there is) a shout of joy." The parallelism is carefully preserved in each member — "anger ... favor"; "a moment ... a life"; "evening ... morning"; "weeping ... joy." We must not repeat the verb "pass the night" with the second clause. Weeping is described, in the first, under the image of a wayfarer who comes in at evening to lodge for the night. The suddenness and surprise of gladness, on the other hand, in the morning, are beautifully represented by the simple לַבֹּקֶר רָצָה, "at dawn, a shout of joy," without a verb. Just as the sun in Eastern lands, without any long prelude of twilight to announce his coming, leaps, as it were, in a moment above the horizon, so does the light of God's love dispel in a moment the long night and darkness of sorrow. See the beautiful parallel, Isa. liv. 7, 8.

II. The recital of his experience (ver. 6-12).

II. 6 And as for me — I had said, in my prosperity,  
 “I shall not be moved for ever.”

7 Thou, O Jehovah, by thy favor hadst made my mountain  
 to stand strong.

Thou didst hide thy face ; I became troubled.

8 (Then) to thee, O Jehovah, did I begin to cry,<sup>c</sup>  
 Yea to Jehovah I made supplication ; (saying,)

9 “What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to  
 The pit ?

Shall the dust give thanks to thee ? shall it declare thy  
 truth ?

10 Hear, O Jehovah, and be gracious unto me ;  
 O Jehovah, be thou my helper.”

6. AND AS FOR ME. The pronoun with the conjunction thus at the beginning of a clause is always emphatic, and generally stands in opposition to something going before, either expressed or understood. Here there is a tacit opposition between the Psalmist's present and his former experience. Now he had learned through the lesson of suffering to trust in God. Before that suffering came, he had begun to trust in himself. “I seemed so strong, so secure, I began to think within myself, I shall never be moved. Thou hadst made my mountain so strong. And then, thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.” Observe that the last three clauses follow one another without a copula, “Thou hadst made,” etc., “Thou didst hide,” etc., “I became,” etc., as if to mark how rapidly the one followed upon the other. The security was followed, as its necessary consequence, by the hiding of God's countenance, and this by terror of spirit.

7. HADST MADE STRONG ; lit. “Thou didst make strength to stand to my mountain” ; or, perhaps, “Thou didst place a fortress upon my mountain.” The language is clearly figurative, though the emblem, no doubt, is borrowed from the stronghold of Zion. So Calvin : “Fortunas meas ita stabiliveras ut firmissimi montis instar haberent.”

9. He now gives us the words of his prayer.

WHAT PROFIT ? (quid lucrī ? τί ὄφελος). The earnest prayer for life, so frequent with the Old Testament saints who walked in shadows, and who only now and then caught a glimpse of the world beyond the grave. Their faith and hope were in God, and therefore could not be bounded by things temporal ; but we must remember that the promises made to them were mostly of a temporal character, and that life and immortality were not yet brought to light. In seasons of despondency, therefore, the abode of the dead (Sheol) seemed dark and cheerless ; and there was not only a natural, but even a religious, recoil from death, because in this life only could men praise God. In the land of forgetfulness no Psalms could be sung. Hezekiah's thanksgiving (Isa. xxxviii.), and many expressions in the book of Job — which last seems to have been in the Psalmist's mind — are in the same strain. The truth seems to be, that, whilst the faith of the Old Testament saints in God was strong and child-like, their hope of immortality was at best but dim and wavering ; brightening perhaps for a moment, when the heart was rejoicing in God as its portion, and then again almost dying away.

11. How his prayer was heard. This



11 (And) thou didst turn for me my mourning into dancing;  
 Thou didst put off my sackcloth, and didst gird me with  
 joy;

12 To the end that (my) glory<sup>a</sup> should sing praise to thee,  
 and not be silent.

O Jehovah, my God, for ever will I give thanks unto thee.

is described by its *effects* upon himself. prayer itself. Comp. Jer. xxxi. 13; (A return to the past tenses, as in ver. Lam. v. 15. The sackcloth of his humiliation God had taken off from him, 6.) The copula (which I have inserted in the translation, to mark the connection more clearly) is omitted in the Heb., because the answer to the prayer he do otherwise than praise God forever for his goodness!

<sup>a</sup> The first Psalm which is called *שִׁיר*, and the only one in this book, *הַנִּכְנַח*, "dedication." LXX, *ἐγκαίνισμός*. Various ceremonies of dedication are mentioned: of the sanctuary, Ex. xl.; of the altar, Num. vii. 10, etc.; of a house, Deut. xx. 5; of Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 63; of the new walls of Jerusalem, Neh. xii. 27. This Psalm is still the Psalm "of dedication" in the Jewish ritual (see Tract. Sofrim. c. 18, § 2). For the origin of the feast see 1 Macc. iv. 52, etc.

<sup>b</sup> The K'ri *מִיִּרְדִּי*, = *ita ut non descenderem*, is ungrammatical in form; for an inf., *יִרְדֵּ* instead of *יִרְדֶּ* nowhere occurs (though we find a similar anomalous infin., *יִרְדֵּ*, Job xxxviii. 4). There can be no doubt that the K'thîbh *מִיִּרְדִּי* is right; see xxviii. 1. So the LXX, *ἔσωσάς με ἀπὸ τῶν καταβαινόντων εἰς λάκκον*.

<sup>c</sup> The futures here are properly *imperfects* (or what Hupfeld terms *relative preterites*, and what the Arabs call "the present in the past"). *אָרָא*, sc. Then, when I was in trouble, *I began to call*, etc. Or we may suppose the poet to throw himself back into the past, and speak from the past, in which case we may keep the strict future, as describing his resolve at the time, and supply the ellipse, "Then I thought," or "then I said I will call," etc., *ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς γενόμενος ἔλεγον*, Symm.

<sup>d</sup> *כְּבוֹד*, app. for *כְּבוֹדִי*, "my glory" = my soul. LXX, *ἡ δόξα μου*. But Jerome, *ut laudet te gloria*. Symm. and Theod. in like manner omit the pronoun. The Chald., taking it as abstr. for coner., *כְּבוֹד* = *נַכְבְּרִים*, renders "the nobles of the world." The Syr. as accus. after the verb, "therefore will I sing to thee glory," and changing the third pers. of the verb into the first. This last interpretation has very much in its favor, for it is remarkable, that of the older versions, the LXX alone have the pronoun. But it requires a change in both the verbs *יוֹמֵר* and *יִרְם*, into *אֹמֵר* and *אֵרָם*.

## PSALM XXXI.

A PSALM in which earnest prayer for deliverance from trouble is kindled and animated throughout by a lively trust and hope in God. (Compare Psalms ix., xxvii.)

It consists of three principal divisions :

I. The singer prays God to be gracious to him in his trouble, expressing at the same time his trust in him, who in times past had been his deliverer (ver. 1-8).

II. He pours out before God the story of his sufferings and his sorrows, beseeching him again to lift upon him the light of his countenance, and to put his enemies to shame (ver. 9-18).

III. He concludes with praise and thanksgiving to God for his goodness to all who trust in him, and particularly to himself; and calls upon all the righteous to love the Lord (ver. 19-24).

The older interpreters, for the most part, supposed the Psalm to have been composed by David when he fled from Saul into the Wilderness of Maon (1 Sam. xxiii. 24). The chief support for this view was found in the use of **בְּחַפְזִי** (ver. 23, Heb.), compared with **נָחַפְזִי** (1 Sam. xxiii. 26). But this, in any case, would be far too slight a ground to rest upon, not to mention that the noun here is clearly used in a different sense from the verb there (see note on the word).

In some of its expressions the Psalm is not unlike Psalms vi., xxxviii., xxxix. On the whole, however, it reminds us more of some parts of Jeremiah than of any other of the Old Testament writings. In its tender and plaintive character it resembles Lam. iii. The phrase **מִגֹּדֵר מִסָּבִיב**, "Fear on every side" (ver. 13 [14]), occurs no less than six times in Jeremiah; and the first member of the same verse is repeated word for word in Jer. xx. 10. Hence Ewald and Hitzig have concluded that the Psalm was written by Jeremiah. Two other suppositions are, however, admissible, viz. either that the prophet, with whom this may have been a favorite Psalm, borrowed from the Psalmist, or that the Psalmist (who may have been one of the later poets) borrowed from the prophet.

On other grounds there is no reason why the Psalm should not be David's. It breathes throughout his rare tenderness of spirit, as well as his faith and courage. The figures of the stronghold and the rock so often repeated, verses 2-4, are most suitable in his mouth (comp. xviii.), and so are the expressions in verse 8 and verse 21.

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

- I. 1 IN thee, O Jehovah, have I found refuge,  
 Let me not be ashamed forever ;  
 In thy righteousness set me at liberty.
- 2 Incline thine ear unto me,  
 Make haste to deliver me :  
 Be thou to me a strong rock,  
 A house of fortresses to save me.
- 3 For thou art my rock and my fortress,  
 And for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me and guide me ;
- 4 Thou wilt bring me forth out of the net they have laid  
 privily for me,  
 For THOU art my stronghold.
- 5 Into thy hand I commend my spirit :  
 Thou hast redeemed me, Jehovah, thou God of truth.

Ver. 1-3 are found with slight variation in lxxi. 1-3.

1. NOT . . . FOREVER = "never"; *not* as Hengst. and others interpret: "Though I am put to shame *now*, yet let not that shame last forever," (Ps. xxx. 5 [6]).

IN THY RIGHTEOUSNESS. See iv. 1 [2]; v. 8 [9].

2. The figures here employed are the same as in xviii.

STRONG ROCK; lit. "a rock of stronghold," i.e. not a rock with a castle upon it, but "a rock which is itself a stronghold."

A HOUSE OF FORTRESSES; a poetical expression = a fortified place.

3. FOR THOU ART, etc. "*Be* to me a rock, etc., *for thou art* my rock." This has been called illogical. But is it so illogical as it seems? The Psalmist prays, "*Be* thou to me," or rather, "*become* to me, *prove thyself to be*, my rock and house of defence; for I *know* that thou, and thou only, art my refuge." This is the logic of the heart, if not of the intellect; the logic, it may be added, of every prayer of faith.

FOR THY NAME'S SAKE . . . LEAD ME

AND GUIDE ME, exactly as in xxiii. 2, 3. The futures here and in the next verse are not to be rendered as imperatives. They express the strong hope and confidence that it will be done according to his faith and his prayer.

5. INTO THY HAND, etc. Upon the expression of confidence in the power and faithfulness of God, follows the expression of the singer's resolve. *My spirit (ruach)*, more than *my soul or life (nephesh)*. It is not only from sickness and death, but from sin and all ghostly enemies, that the man of God would be kept, and, therefore, he commends to God, not his body or his bodily life alone, but the life of his spirit, which is more precious (comp. Isa. xxxviii. 16, "life of my spirit").

I COMMEND (*παράθεμαι*); i.e. place as a *deposit*, entrust.

With these words our Lord breathed out his life (Luke xxiii. 46), as he had before used words from another Psalm in his agony on the cross. The first words were from a Psalm (the twenty-second) which, typically, at least, foreshadowed his sufferings; whereas, this is not in the same way predictive. But

- 6 I hate<sup>a</sup> them that observe lying vanities;  
 As for me — in Jehovah do I trust.  
 7 Let me exult and rejoice in thy mercy,  
 That thou hast seen my affliction,  
 (That thou) hast known my soul in adversities,  
 8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy,  
 (But) hast set my feet in a large room.

- II. 9 Be gracious unto me, O Jehovah, for I am in trouble :  
 Mine eye is consumed with vexation, — my soul and  
 my body.  
 10 For my life is spent with sorrow,  
 And my years with sighing :  
 My strength hath failed because of mine iniquity,  
 And my bones are consumed, because of all my adver-  
 saries.

the Holy One of God, in that last hour of mortal agony, chose these words of one of his servants, to express the solemn surrender of his life. And in so doing, he gave them a new interpretation. The Jewish singer only meant by them that he put himself and all his hopes into the hand of God. Jesus meant by them, that *by his own act, of his own free will*, he gave up his spirit, and therewith his life, to the Father. (Observe how the evangelists carefully choose their expressions, ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα, Matt. ; παρέδωκεν τὸ πν., John.) And they who have died with their Lord, have died with the same words on their lips. These were the last words of Polycarp, of Bernard, of Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Luther, Melancthon, and many others. "Blessed are they," says Luther, "who die not only *for* the Lord, as martyrs; not only *in* the Lord, as all believers; but likewise *with* the Lord, as breathing forth their lives in these words: 'Into thy hand I commend my spirit.'"

THOU HAST REDEEMED ME. This gives the reason why he entrusts his spirit to God. (It may be rendered as a relative clause, thou who hast, etc.)

It is = "Thou *hast been*, and thou *art*, my Redeemer"; and further, there is implied, "because thou changest not, I confidently anticipate redemption from this present calamity." The past continuing up to the present moment (strict perfect), is in the singer's mind a pledge of the future, especially because God is the GOD OF TRUTH, as opposed to the lying vanities (in the next verse), i.e. all false objects of trust, here perhaps especially *false gods*. Comp. 2 Chron. xv. 3. [In Deut. xxxii. 4 אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהִים, not very different, except that אֱלֹהִים here refers rather to the being and nature of God, who is the absolutely true, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, to his dealings with his creatures, in which his *faithfulness* is shown.]

7. HAST KNOWN. See note on i. 6.

8. SHUT ME UP; cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. A LARGE ROOM, as in xviii. 19 [20].

9-13. The prayer of the Psalmist now bases itself upon the greatness of his suffering.

10. BECAUSE OF MINE INIQUITY. See how the eye is turned within, as well as without, upon his enemies. Suffering does its work when it leads us to commune with our own hearts, and to discover the evils which are hidden there.



- 11 I have become a reproach to my neighbors exceedingly,<sup>b</sup>  
 And a terror to mine acquaintance :  
 They that did see me in the streets fled from me.
- 12 I have been forgotten as a dead man out of mind ;  
 I am become like a broken vessel.
- 13 For I have heard the slander of many,  
 Fear on every side ;  
 Whilst they took their counsel together against me,  
 They devised to take away my life.
- 14 But as for me — I have trusted in thee, O Jehovah ;  
 I have said, "Thou art my God."
- 15 My times are in thy hand :  
 Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from  
 them that persecute me.
- 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant ;  
 O save me in thy loving-kindness !
- 17 O Jehovah, let me not be ashamed, for I have called  
 upon thee :  
 Let the wicked be ashamed ; let them be silent<sup>c</sup> in the  
 grave ;
- 18 Let the lying lips become dumb,  
 Which speak haughtily against the righteous,  
 With pride and contempt.

12. OUT OF MIND ; lit. "out of heart" ;  
 sim. "out of the mouth," (Deut. xxxi.  
 21).

13. FOR, not as giving the reason of  
 his comparison of himself to a broken  
 vessel, but as a further explanation of  
 "because of all mine adversaries" (ver.  
 10). From the effects he goes back to  
 the cause. The verbs are in the pret.,  
 because this state of things had lasted  
 long. The first two members of the  
 verse occur again, word for word (Jer.  
 xx. 10), and the phrase, "terror round  
 about," (Jer. vi. 25 ; xx. 3, 4 ; xlv. 5 ;  
 xlix. 29 ; Lam. ii. 22).

14-18. Again wonderful words of  
 trust, out of which flow his petitions.  
 "Thou art my God." Mighty strength

of faith when a man, conscious of his  
 own sinfulness (ver. 10), and with a  
 world in arms against him, yea, forsaken  
 of his own friends (ver. 11), can still  
 turn to God and say, "Thou art my  
 God."

15. MY TIMES ; i.e. all my life with  
 its "sundry and manifold changes," its  
 joys and sorrows, its hopes and conflicts,  
 are not the sport of chance, or the crea-  
 tures of a blind fate, but are in thy hand,  
 O thou living, personal Redeemer. On  
 this confidence are grounded the petitions  
 which follow, and the hopes expressed  
 (ver. 18). The second of the petitions  
 (ver. 16), is borrowed from the high  
 priest's blessing (Num. 6. 25, cf. Ps. iv.  
 6 [7]).

- III. 19 How great is thy goodness,  
 Which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,  
 Which thou hast wrought for them that find their  
 refuge in thee,  
 In the presence of the sons of men
- 20 Thou hidest them in the hiding-place of thy presence  
 from the conspiracies of men;  
 Thou keepest them in a tabernacle from the strife  
 of tongues.
- 21 Blessed be Jehovah,  
 That he hath showed me his marvellous loving-  
 kindness in a fenced city.
- 22 As for me — I had said in my confusion,  
 “I am cut off from the sight of thine eyes.”  
 Yet surely thou didst hear the voice of my supplications  
 When I cried unto thee.
- 23 Oh love Jehovah, all ye beloved of his!  
 (For) Jehovah preserveth the faithful,  
 And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

19-24. “His well-grounded hope now brings triumphant certainty, and this breaks forth in glad acknowledgment of God’s goodness to the righteous, and an exhortation to all to wait on him in unshaken confidence of heart.”

19. THOU HAST LAID UP; lit., “hidden”; comp. xvii. 14, and “the hidden manna,” Rev. ii. 17. This is the love of God manifested to the soul in secret; the next clause tells of its open manifestation, “Thou hast wrought.”

20. THE HIDING-PLACE OF THY PRESENCE, or “of thy countenance”; elsewhere, of God’s tabernacle, xxvii. 5; or of his wings, lxi. 4 [5]; or of his shadow, xci. 1. But this is the most striking figure of all — to be hidden in the light of God’s face — hidden in that splendor where his power is hidden (Hab. iii. 4). What an image at once of safety and blessedness! Milton’s striking expression, “Dark with excess

of bright,” explains how it is possible to be *hidden in light*.

21. David now turns to his own experience. But what is the fenced or fortified city? I incline to think there is an historical reference in the words. Possibly Ziklag may be meant (as Delitzsch suggests). Most, however, understand it metaphorically = with thee I am *as if* I were in a fortified place.

22. IN MY CONFUSION (*in stupore meo*, Jerome; ἐκπλήξι, Symm.; *in trepidatione mea*, Calvin).

I AM CUT OFF — so did his faith begin to waver, and yet in the midst of this confusion he betook himself to prayer. “Nec obstat,” says Calvin, “carnis infirmitas quo minus (sancti) etiam fere dejecti indefessos Deo athletas se praebeant.”

23. And now, because God had heard his prayer of faith, and been better to him than his unbelief, he calls upon all

24 Be of good courage, and let your heart be strong,  
All ye that wait upon Jehovah.

to whom God has been gracious to love him.

24. ALL YE THAT WAIT. (The Psalm ends as Psalm xxvii.) Hope and waiting are marks peculiarly of the Old Testament dispensation. It is true, even in the New, one apostle writes, "We are saved by hope." And another says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall

be"; but he adds, what no believer in the day of types and shadows could have said, "We *know* that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Wonderful, indeed, is the hopeful trust of the saints of old in God, when we remember that they did not know him as God manifest in the flesh.

<sup>a</sup> שָׂנְאָתִי. The LXX, Syr., Arab., (and in some mss. Jerome), have here the second pers., "Thou hatest." And this has been adopted by Ewald, Hitzig, and others, because of the opposition in the following וַיֹּאמֶר, "but as for me." The opposition, however, may be in thought between himself and those who adhere to false gods. הַשֹּׁמְרִים, lit. "who keep," or as the Prayer-book version, "hold of," hence "who follow, obey," etc. (cf. the similar use of the Latin *observare*, Virg. Georg. iv. 212), as in Hosea iv. 10 (E. V. "take heed,") Prov. xxvii. 18 (E. V. "wait on.") In Jonah ii. 9 we have the same phrase, but with Piel instead of Kal.

<sup>b</sup> This verse is difficult. According to the Masoretic text it stands: "Because of all mine adversaries I have become a reproach, and to my neighbors exceedingly, and a terror to mine acquaintance," etc. But this reads lamely. The word מֵאֵר comes in very awkwardly, even if we repeat הַיְיָתִי חֲרָפָה with the second member. Hence Ewald joins the words מְכַל צָרָי with the previous verse; and this completes the parallelism in verse 11, and is on the whole satisfactory, except that the וַיִּלְשָׁנִי is not well accounted for. It is true that most commentators, while retaining the present division of the verse, take the וַיִּ here to be = "even"; "*etiam* vicinis meis," Calvin; "*selbst* meinen Nachbarn Schmach," Mendelssohn. But the passages generally quoted in support of this meaning of the conjunction are, as Hupfeld has shown, not to the point. It does occur in the sense of "and that," *idque* (Gesen. Thesaur.); a sense, however, which does not suit here. Delitzsch, after J. H. Michaelis, supposes מֵאֵר in this place to be a noun, meaning "a burden," formed from a root אָרַר, cogn. with the Arab. root أَرَّ, *onus*. Then the verse would read, because of, etc. . . . I have become a reproach to my neighbors, a burden," etc.

<sup>c</sup> יִהְיֶה may either be fut. Kal. for יִהְיֶה (Gesen. § 67), or Niph. for יִהְיֶה, "shall be silent, or be made silent to Sheol," i.e. shall be reduced to silence by being laid in the grave.

## PSALM XXXII.

THIS is the second of the Seven Penitential Psalms, as they are called, "which," says Selnecker, "St. Augustine used often to read with weeping heart and eyes, and which, before his death, he had written on the wall over against his sick bed, that he might exercise himself therein, and find comfort therein in his sickness." St. Augustine's own words: "*Intelligentia prima est ut te noris peccatorem*," might stand as its motto.

Beginning with the recital of his own experience, David here turns it into instruction and warning for others. He had long struggled with the sense of his sin, had long been crushed to the earth with his burden, because he would not humble himself before God; but God had given him again the heart of a child. He had gone to his Father with the penitent confession, "I have sinned"; and, as in the parable, the Father's heart moved towards his prodigal son when he was yet a long way off, so David found that his Father was ready to forgive — "I said, I will confess"; and "thou tookest away the guilt of my sin."

There can be little doubt, I think, that this Psalm was composed after Nathan came to him. Psalm li. was the confession of his great sin and the prayer for forgiveness. This Psalm is the record of the confession made and the forgiveness obtained, and the conscious blessedness of his position as a son restored to his Father's house. There was a shelter for him there now — "Thou art my hiding-place." There was joy and gladness on his return — "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." And here he carries out the resolve of Psalm li.: "Then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

The instruction of the Psalm may be summed up in the words of Prov. xxviii. 13, or in those of 1 John i. 8, 9.

[A Maskil<sup>a</sup> of David.]

I. 1 BLESSED is he whose transgression is taken away, whose sin is covered:

1, 2. Sin is here (as in Ex. xxxiv. 7) spoken of under three appellations, so as to include the whole idea of sin in all its manifestations: First, as "transgres-

sion" (פְּשָׁע) or departure from God, and open defection from his covenant; or as Donne says in his sermon on this Psalm, "It is a malicious and a forcible



- 2 Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah reckoneth not iniquity,  
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
- 3 For (while) I kept silence, my bones waxed old  
Through my roaring all the day long.

opposition to God: it is when this Herod and this Pilate (this body and this soul of ours) are made friends and agreed, that they may concur to the crucifying of Christ." Secondly, as "a coming short of the mark" (הִחַזַּקְתִּי), a deflection from an aim, a *not* doing of our duty (see the original meaning of the root, Judg. xx. 16, where the Benjamites are said not to *miss* the mark by a hair's breadth). Thirdly, as including in the idea of wrong-doing, the guilt, and also the punishment (עָוֹן). And there is a threefold blessedness. The man is one who has his transgression *taken away* (lit. who is *lightened of the burden* of sin), comp. Ex. xxxiv. 7; John i. 29; who has his sin *covered*, so that he is in God's sight as one who has not done the sin, cf. lxxxv. 2 [3], and Isa. xxxviii. 17; xliii. 25; xlv. 22; for as Donne says, "Our merciful God, when he sees us under this mantle, this covering, Christ spread upon his church, conceals his knowledge of our sins, and suffers them not to reflect upon our consciences, in a consternation thereof"; he is also one

2. TO WHOM JEHOVAH RECKONETH NOT INIQUITY, which, according to St. Paul's interpretation (Rom. iv. 6-9), is equivalent to saying that he is one whose faith is reckoned for righteousness. The non-reckoning of iniquity, and the reckoning of righteousness, are convertible terms; and the righteousness so reckoned is faith, or a righteousness without works. But God only thus forgives and justifies one who, with all truth and sincerity of heart, confesses his sin, making no reservation, no excuses, no attempts still to hold fast and hide some darling lust, as De Muis says: "*qui non peccat animo poenitendi, aut non poenitet animo peccandi.*" "As the prophet David's principal purpose in this text is, according to the interpretation of St. Paul, to derive all the bless-

edness of man from God; so it is also to put some conditions in man, comprehended in this, *that there be no guile in his spirit*. . . . He that makes half repentance, makes none." (The clause may be a relative clause, or may be taken conditionally, as Seb. Schmid, "*modo non sit in spiritu ejus dolus.*") The two things are, at any rate, "connected as conspiring to the blessedness of the man (as Leighton says), viz. the free remission of sin, and the inner cleansing of the heart."

NO GUILT; no falseness, that is, either to himself or to God. Of this guilelessness Leighton remarks: "Nothing is more pleasing to God, who seeth the heart, nothing more like to God; and therefore is it most pleasing to him, because it is most like him."—*Meditat. Ethico-Crit.* in Psalm xxxii.

3. FOR, as explaining how he had come to know what he had just before said. David had felt the need of this guileless spirit, *for* he had "kept silence," had striven but too long to smother the sense of his guilt, which was meanwhile like a smouldering fire within him. Afraid to confess his sin to himself, afraid to confess it to God, he could not still escape the goading and pricking of his conscience, and hence his misery.

MY BONES; see vi. 2 [3], and cf. Job xiii. 28.

THROUGH MY ROARING; i.e. the cry extorted from the anguish of his spirit so long as he KEPT SILENCE; i.e. refused to confess his sin. "Sin is a serpent, and he that covers sin does but keep it warm, that it may sting the more fiercely, and disperse the venom and malignity thereof the more effectually."—*Donne*. This "roaring," brought him no relief, because "*deerat adhuc vox illa, cui semper resonant viscera paterna, vox filii revertentis et errores confitentis.*"—*Leighton*.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy<sup>b</sup> upon me ;  
 My moisture was turned into the drought of summer.  
 [Selah.]

5 (I said) I will acknowledge<sup>c</sup> my sin unto thee,  
 And mine iniquity did I not cover.  
 I said, "I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah,"  
 And THOU tookest away the iniquity of my sin. [Selah.]

II. 6 For this cause let every godly man pray to thee  
 In a time when thou mayest be found ;  
 (So) surely<sup>d</sup> when the great waters overflow,  
 They shall not reach him.

4. FOR (this gives the reason of his roaring) God's hand was heavy upon him (cf. 1 Sam. v. 6, 11 ; Job xxiii. 2 ; Ps. xxxviii. 2 [3]), and that hand is "premens gravissima, sublevans suavisima et potentissima."

MY MOISTURE ; i.e. the juices of life. By the inward anguish in the struggle not to confess, these were turned (as it were) into the drought of summer. "He would not be humbled by the confession of his sin, and therefore he was humbled by the weight of God's hand." Thus, in his attempt to spare himself, he was guilty of the worst cruelty to himself ; "sub specie parcendi vere sibi crudelis est." Cf. cii. 3 [4], where the particle of comparison is supplied. In Job xxx. 30, it is omitted as here. Symm. *ὡς καὶ ὁσος θεινόν*.

5. The end of the struggle—confession, and so forgiveness and peace. God covers sin, but man must not cover his sin before God. "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9). The former part of this verse contains the *resolve*, "I would acknowledge," etc. ; the second, the *expression* of the resolve, "I said," etc. (See more in Critical Note.)

AND THOU. The pronoun is emphatic: it was *God's* doing. To *him* he made his confession ; *he* forgave. The same words are used here of sin and its forgiveness as in verse 1. The confession

and the taking away are described as simultaneous. "Vox nondum est in ore," says Augustine, "et vulnus sanatur in corde." And Leighton : "Quam sit proclivis et facilis ad veniam misericordiarum Pater, tanto clarius elucescit, quod vel ad primam confessionis vocem emissam, imo vel propositum interius conceptum, emittitur extemplo e curia coelesti remissio, seu indulgentia plenissima, Dixi confitebor et tu condonasti," etc.

INIQUITY OF MY SIN. Many, after Symmachus and Kimchi, have supposed this to be equivalent to "my very great sin" ; but perhaps the word here and above (ver. 2), rendered "iniquity," might better be rendered "guilt" ; a meaning which it often has.

6. And now, because of the grace thus vouchsafed to every repentant sinner, David would encourage all the godly to seek him who deals so graciously with sinners.

IN A TIME WHEN THOU MAYEST BE FOUND ; lit. "in a time of finding," no object being expressed. The object may either be Jehovah himself (as Isa. lv. 6 ; cf. Deut. iv. 29 ; Jer. xxix. 13), or more generally "grace and forgiveness," as in the common phrase "to find grace." See also lxix. 13 [14] ; Isa. xlix. 8. The LXX render *ἐν εὐθέτω καιρῷ*. It has been well remarked, "Aptissimum inveniendo tempus, quando invenit homo

7 Thou art my hiding-place ;

Thou wilt preserve me from trouble ;

Thou wilt compass me about with songs <sup>e</sup> of deliverance.

[Selah.]

III. 8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shouldest go,

I will counsel thee with my eye upon thee.<sup>f</sup>

9 Be ye not as horse, (or) as mule without understanding,

Whose trapping <sup>e</sup> is with bit and bridle to hold them,

(Or else) they will not come nigh unto thee.<sup>h</sup>

10 Many sorrows are to the wicked,

But whoso trusteth in Jehovah, loving-kindness compasseth him about.

11 Rejoice in Jehovah, and exult, O ye righteous,

And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

cor suum praeparatum ad revertendum Deumque quaerendum." He who thus seeks Jehovah when he may be found, shall not be swept away when his judgments are let loose like a flood of waters upon the earth.

7. David's own joyful experience of this safety, of which he is speaking to others. Scarcely has he held out the hope to others, when he turns with a happy trustfulness to God —

THOU ART MY HIDING-PLACE. He would be hidden in God. St. Paul could scarcely say more, "Our life is hid with Christ in God."

COMPASS ME ABOUT; i.e. give me abundant cause, turn where I may, to praise thee. God will do this, and so be the *author* as well as the *object* of his praise. Comp. xxii. 25 [26], "*From thee comes my praise.*"

8. Out of his past and present experience he will now counsel others, and especially those who are still impenitent; and the tenor of his counsel is, that they should not, like brutes, resist and refuse

submission till they are forced into it, but that they should willingly come with repentance and confession to God.

The transition here to the direct form of address in the first person is certainly abrupt. Some have supposed that these are the words of God; but perhaps David himself speaks with something of a father's warning.

I WILL INSTRUCT, etc. Comp. for this word ci. 2 ("behave myself wisely," E.V.) with Prov. i. 3; and for "teaching in the way" (xxv. 8, 12, with Prov. iv. 11). The guidance with the eye is a gentle guidance. A look is enough, as opposed to that bit and bridle which the mulish nature requires.

9. Then follows the warning against a brutish and stubborn impenitence, with the not unfrequent comparison of men to the lower animals (comp. Isa. i. 3; Jer. viii. 6).

10. The usual contrast between the lot of the ungodly and that of the righteous, as the sum of all that has been said, and as a great religious axiom.

מְשָׁלִי. LXX, συνέσεις, εἰς σύνεσιν, and hence by many explained, "giving instruction," "a didactic poem." But this is a meaning often

not applicable, as, for instance, xlv., where it is also found, nor in xlvii. 7 [8], where זָמַרְי מ' must mean "play skilfully." Hence it probably denotes "a skilfully constructed or choice poem"; "ein feines Lied," as Ewald renders it. See more in the General Introduction.

<sup>b</sup> הִכָּבֵד. The fut. here seems to be equivalent either to an aorist or an imperfect, and denotes either the frequent blow, or the continued blow.

<sup>c</sup> אוֹרִינָה. The use of the fut. here again presents some difficulty. It evidently refers to past time, as Hupfeld says, and hence he calls it a relative preterite. But I cannot see why it may not be designedly employed not to express the past *action*, but the past *resolve*, the sentence being somewhat elliptical: " (Then I thought, then I resolved) I would acknowledge." Comp. a similar instance in xxx. 8. It may be, indeed, as Hupfeld suggests in his critical note (p. 177), that the אֲמַרְתִּי of the following clause has been misplaced, and should stand before אוֹרִינָה at the beginning of the verse (as in lxxiii. 15, where it ought to stand, he thinks, before ver. 13), but then it must be repeated before אוֹרִינָה. At any rate, the two futures correspond to one another as expressing the *resolve*, first as conceived, then as uttered; and the two preterites as marking the consequence in each case. אוֹרִינָה only in this sense, besides, Prov. xxviii. 13, with עַל in the Hithp., Neh. i. 6; ix. 2.

<sup>d</sup> רַק. Here used in strong assertion. It means primarily "thin," then "simple, absolute." Thence it passes into the meaning of "only," "nothing else but," and hence, as the strongest restrictive particle, is used in affirmations; for that which so takes place that nothing else takes place, does *assuredly* take place. It is a particle not only of restriction and exception, but of opposition (1 Kings viii. 19; xv. 5) and strong affirmation (1 Kings xxi. 25; Prov. xiii. 10; Gen. xx. 11).

<sup>e</sup> רֵינִי seems to be a plural from the infinitive רֵן (Job xxxviii. 7), used as a substantive, like רֵבִי from רָב, רֶחֶק from רָחַק.

<sup>f</sup> אֲרִנָּצָה. Evidently this is a *constructio praeagnans*. The Chald. explains it: "I will counsel thee and keep mine eye upon thee," some such verb as שׁוּם being supplied before עֵינִי. It is, however, unnecessary to do this. The words, "mine eye upon thee" may be merely subjoined as a further explanation of *the manner in which* the counsel would be given. According to the accents, however, עֵלְיָךְ must be connected with אֲרִנָּצָה, "I will consult upon, or concerning, thee, i.e. for thy good"; and then עֵינִי, "with mine eye," will be equivalent to "watching thee with mine eye." Hupfeld contends that עֵינִי is not an *accus.* of the instrument, but that we have here an instance of a *double subject* of the person and the instrument, as in iii. 5; he also explains



the use of the prep. עַל, as arising from the idea of "watching" in the verb: "I will counsel (thee), *watching over thee* (עֲלֶיךָ) with mine eye."

<sup>s</sup> צָרִי, harness, or trappings (from עָרָה, "to put on"). Ewald, following the older versions (LXX, ἐν χαλινῷ καὶ κημῶ τὰς σιαγόνας αὐτῶν ἄγξαι τῶν μὴ ἐγγιζόντων πρὸς σέ, and Jerome: "in camo et fraeno maxillas eorum constringe qui non approximant ad te"), takes צָרִי in the sense of "jaw," connecting it with the Arab. خَد, "cheek." The sentence is a relative one: "(Whose) trapping (consists) in bit and bridle to hold (them)."

<sup>h</sup> בֶּל קִרֹּב, lit. "not approaching, or, there is no approaching, to thee." An asyndeton. We must supply "because," i.e. otherwise, and without force, they will not come nigh to men. This is the only instance in which בֶּל stands before the inf. or noun, elsewhere it is always אֲבִל.

## PSALM XXXIII.

God is the God of creation, of providence, of grace. This is, in a few words, the Psalmist's theme. Jehovah created the world (ver. 6 ff). Jehovah governs the world (ver. 10 ff); and all nations and kings, whether they acknowledge him or not, are but instruments in his hand. Jehovah especially reveals himself in mercy and love to his own chosen people (ver. 18 ff). The key-note of this last sentiment is already struck in verse 12.

This is one of the few Psalms in the first book which in the Hebrew is without an inscription.

The Psalm consists of the following divisions:

I. An introduction in which the singer calls on the righteous to praise Jehovah with all manner of music (ver. 1-3).

Then follow the reasons why he is worthy to be praised.

II. (1) First, because he is good and faithful (ver. 4, 5); and next (2), because by his word all things were created (ver. 4-9).

III. Because he is the All-wise (ver. 10, 11), All-seeing (ver. 13-15), and Almighty (ver. 16, 17) Ruler of Nations (ver. 10-17).

IV. Lastly, because he watches over (ver. 18), preserves (ver. 19), and protects (ver. 20) all those that fear him and trust in his Holy Name (ver. 18-21).

The Psalm concludes with a short petition, that it may be done unto Israel according to his hope.

- 1 SHOUT for joy, O ye righteous, in Jehovah ;  
For the upright, praise is comely.
- 2 Give thanks to Jehovah with a harp.  
Upon a ten-stringed lute play unto him.
- 3 Sing unto him a new song,  
Play skilfully on the strings with a joyful noise.
- 4 For the word of Jehovah is upright ;  
And all that he doeth is faithfulness.
- 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment :  
The earth is full of the loving-kindness of Jehovah ;
- 6 By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made ;  
And all their host by the breath of his mouth.
- 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap ;  
He layeth up the depths in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear before Jehovah ;  
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

3. A NEW SONG, not here one which has new marvels of God's power and grace for its theme, as in xl. 3 [4] ; xviii. 1 (comp. ὠδὴ καὶνὴ, Rev. xiv. 3), but rather one which springs freshly from a thankful and rejoicing heart—one which seeks to put an old theme in a new light.

4, 5. First, the *moral* attributes of God are mentioned as a reason why the righteous should praise him. See the same attributes enumerated in xxxvi. 5, 6 [6, 7], with the same reference to God's providential care of his creatures. Comp. lxxxix. 14 [15].

6. From the present proofs of God's love in the earth, the thoughts of the sacred poet naturally go back to the creation of all things. And as he had before declared what the "word" and "work" of Jehovah are, in their essential characters (ver. 4), so now he describes further the operation of that word, and the work which results therefrom.

BY THE WORD, explained further ver. 9, the creative fiat, as in Gen. i.

THE BREATH OF HIS MOUTH ; apparently almost the same thing as "the

word" before. So in Isa. xi. 4, "the breath of his lips," is used of the sentence of judgment which thence issues. (So Calvin.) It can hardly be understood here of the Spirit of God who moved over the chaotic mass as the great source of life in creation ; at any rate, not in the personal sense, which is quite precluded by the addition "of his mouth." The two expressions are designedly employed in the parallelism "word" and "breath of his mouth," to indicate that it was *only* by the utterance of his will, and not by any work or effort, that God created all things. This is further explained in verse 9.

7. The heaven and the sea are mentioned as the theatre of God's almighty power, as the earth before of his loving-kindness ; and thus the universe is summed up.

AS AN HEAP ; a figure, I think, manifestly suggested by the appearance of the waves of the sea. The expression may have been borrowed from Josh. iii. 13-16 and Ex. xv. 8. Clericus finds the point of the comparison (the *tertium comparationis*) in the fact that the sea is shut in by its shores as the heaps of corn (Isa. xvii.

- 9 For he said, and it was ;  
 He commanded and it stood fast.
- 10 Jehovah hath brought to naught the counsel of the nations ;  
 He hath made the thoughts of the people of none effect.
- 11 The counsel of Jehovah standeth fast for ever,  
 The thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah,  
 The people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.
- 13 From heaven hath Jehovah looked ;  
 He hath seen all the children of men.
- 14 From the place of his dwelling he hath looked down  
 Upon all the inhabitants of the earth ;
- 15 (Even) he who fashioneth their hearts together,  
 Who considereth all their works.
- 16 A king doth not triumph by the greatness of an host ;  
 A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.

11) are by the walls of the granary in which they are stored. This, he thinks, is confirmed by the parallelism in the next member of the verse, which repeats the same idea in a different form. Both expressions would thus refer to the original act of creation, when the waters were "gathered together" that the dry land might appear.

9. A manifest reference to Gen. i. 3 : "And God said, Let light be, and light was."

10, 11. After speaking of God's power in creation, the Psalmist goes on to speak of his providence as ordering the world. As Calvin says, "Postquam breviter attigit mundi creationem ad institutum sermonem redit, quotidianos scilicet eventus certos esse providentie testes." There is a manifest antithesis between "the counsels and the thoughts" of men, which Jehovah *brings to naught*, and "the counsels and thoughts" of Jehovah, which *abide for ever*.

12. This verse already anticipates what is said more fully verses 18-20, and here we have the doctrine of God's universal providence looked at in its special application to the chosen people,

as often ; see Ps. xxiv. 1. It is, however, immediately connected with the preceding verse ; for the fact that Jehovah's counsels stand fast for ever is a matter of consolation for the people whose God he is (cxlvii. 19, 20), and whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance (xlvii. 4 [5]). Similarly Calvin : "Apte hic versus cohaeret cum proximo : quia parum prodesset quod de perpetuitate consilii Dei dictum fuit tenere, nisi ad nos pertineret."

13-15. The omnipresence and omniscience of God. He not only observes men's doings, but knows their hearts, as having created them. This is implied in ver. 15. As Calvin well puts it : "Ab ipsa autem creatione ratiocinatur ; ... etsi flexuosos quisque recessus in animo suo occultet, ut mire alii ab aliis differant, ac in tanta varietate confusa sit caligo, Dei tamen oculos non perstringi neque offuscari, quin idoneus sit operis sui cognitor." (Comp. Isa. xxix. 15, 16, and see the fuller statement of the truth, Ps. xciv. 8 ff.)

16, 17. The weakness and insufficiency of all human *power*, however great, as before of all human *intellect*. "King

- 17 A horse is a vain thing for victory ;  
Neither can he deliver any by his great power.
- 18 Behold, the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him,  
Upon them that hope in his goodness,
- 19 To deliver their soul from death,  
And to keep them alive in famine.
- 20 Our soul hath waited for Jehovah ;  
He is our help and our shield.
- 21 For in him our heart rejoiceth,  
Because we have trusted in his holy name.
- 22 Let thy goodness, O Jehovah, be upon us,  
According as we have hoped in thee.

and mighty man and horse" (i.e. war-horse," as elsewhere "chariot and horse"), are selected as types of earthly power in all its greatness.

17. VICTORY. The word (יִשְׁעִי) does not necessarily mean "salvation," "deliverance," etc. It occurs in the sense of "victory," Hab. iii. 8, and the verb in Ps. xlv. 3 [4].

18. UPON; more literally, "towards."

18-22. HOPE ... WAIT ... TRUST ... HOPE. This attitude of hope and trust is the attitude of the church in all ages, for she is not yet made perfect; but the

Jewish church was in a special sense the church of the future, and therefore, also, in a special manner a waiting and hoping church. The whole history of Israel may, indeed, be summed up in Jacob's dying words: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." The Hebrew language has, accordingly, several words which express this hoping, forward-looking attitude. Besides the two words here, there is the more common word which occurs three times in Ps. xxv. (see note on ver. 3), twice in xxvii. 14, and often elsewhere.

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## PSALM XXXIV.

THIS is, like the last, a Psalm in which God's providence and moral government of the world are the subject of grateful acknowledgment. His guardian care of the righteous is more especially celebrated, and applied to the individual circumstances of the Psalmist.

This is one of the alphabetical Psalms, on which see the introduction to Psalm xxv. The order of the Hebrew alphabet is preserved, except that there is no verse beginning with the letter ו (Vau). The number of verses, however, is made to correspond with the number of letters in the alphabet, notwithstanding this omission, by means of a



verse added at the end, which begins (as is also the case in Psalm xxv.) with the word פָּדָה, "redeem."

No value can be attached to the superscription, with its historical reference, because, while it is borrowed from 1 Sam. xxi. 13 [Heb. 14], Abimelech is substituted for Achish, which looks like a confusion with the narrative in Gen. xx., xxi.; and further, the contents of the Psalm do not very readily, or naturally harmonize with the supposed circumstances.

The contents of the Psalm may generally be distributed into pairs of verses. But the alphabetical order of course precludes anything like very close connection. The principal thought of the Psalm is God's care of the afflicted, and this appears repeated in different forms.

The closest connection is between verses 12-15, which contain one consecutive piece of instruction.

[*(A Psalm) of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech ; who drove him away, and he departed*].

- א 1 I WILL bless Jehovah at all times,  
Continually (shall) his praise (be) in my mouth.  
ב 2 In Jehovah shall my soul make her boast :  
The afflicted shall hear thereof and be glad.  
ג 3 O magnify Jehovah with me,  
And let us exalt his name together.  
ד 4 I sought Jehovah, and he answered me,  
And he delivered me out of all my terrors.  
ה 5 They looked unto him, and were lightened ;  
And may their faces not be ashamed.  
ו 6 This afflicted man cried, and Jehovah heard,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.

5. THEY LOOKED; viz. "the afflicted," mentioned in verse 2; or it may only mean generally "men looked"; others, i.e. besides myself, have in like manner experienced God's loving-kindness.

WERE LIGHTENED; i.e. were bright with gladness because he heard them, reflecting as it were the light of his countenance; comp. iv. 6 [7]. The verb is clearly to be taken in this sense here as in Isa. lx. 5. In its more common ac-

ception it means "to flow" (whence *nāhār*, "a stream," and *n' hārāh*, "light"). The connection between the two ideas is obvious.

AND MAY, etc. The use of the negative לֹא here necessitates an optative rendering.

Delitzsch translates the verse :  
"Hinblickend auf Ihn wird man licht,  
Und solcher Antlitz darf erröthen nicht."  
and Hengstenberg very well explains

- π 7 The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that  
 fear him,  
 And delivereth them.
- ρ 8 Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good !  
 Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
- ς 9 Oh fear Jehovah, ye his saints !  
 For there is no want to them that fear him.
- ρ 10 Young lions have lacked and suffered hunger,  
 But they that seek Jehovah shall not want any good  
 (thing).
- ς 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me,  
 I will teach you the fear of Jehovah :
- ς 12 What man is he that desireth life,  
 That loveth (many) days that he may see good ?
- ς 13 Keep thy tongue from evil.  
 And thy lips from speaking guile ;
- ρ 14 Depart from evil and do good,  
 Seek peace, and pursue it.
- ς 15 The eyes of Jehovah are towards the righteous,  
 And his ears (are open) unto their cry.
- ρ 16 The face of Jehovah is against the evil-doers,  
 To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- ς 17 They cried, and Jehovah heard,  
 And delivered them out of all their troubles.

the use of לָאָה (= μή = ne) by saying, that "it signifies a shuddering at their being put to shame, as though it were something monstrous."

7. THE ANGEL. Not apparently here used of any particular angel, as "the Angel of the Covenant," or "the Captain of the Lord's host," but rather in a collective sense, "troops of angels."

8. OH TASTE AND SEE. Comp. γεύσασθαι, Heb. vi. 5 ; 1 Pet. ii. 3. "Nisi gustaveris," says St. Bernard, "non videbis. Gustate, inquit, et videte, quoniam suavis est Dominus. Manna absconditum est, nomen novum est, quod

nemo scit nisi qui accepit. Non illud eruditio, sed unctio docet, nec scientia sed conscientia comprehendit."

10. YOUNG LIONS. Instead of this the LXX have πλούσιοι.

11. A form of address common in the Proverbs. See chapters i.-ix. Similar is the use of τέκνα by St. John in his Epistles.

13. On this taming of the tongue—of which so much is said in the proverbs of all nations—see xv. 2, 3 ; xxxix. 1-3 [2-4] ; cxli. 3 ; Prov. iv. 24 ; xlii. 3 ; xxi. 23 ; James iii. 2 ff.

17. THEY ; i.e. the righteous, mentioned verse 15, and again verse 19. See

- פ 18 Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart,  
 And saveth such as are of a contrite spirit  
 נ 19 Many are the sufferings of the righteous,  
 But out of all of them doth Jehovah deliver him.  
 ו 20 He preserveth all his bones ;  
 Not one of them is broken.  
 ח 21 Evil shall slay the wicked,  
 And they that hate the righteous shall be punished.  
 ע 22 Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants,  
 And all they that trust in him shall not be punished.

on this position of the pronoun the note  
on ix. 12.

21. BE PUNISHED. See note <sup>k</sup> on Ps.  
v. 10.

## PSALM XXXV.

THIS Psalm, if it be, as the inscription tells us, a Psalm of David, must have been composed either during his persecution by Saul, or during the revolt of Absalom. It is usual to connect it with his words in 1 Sam. xxiv. 15 [16], "Jehovah therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause (the same expression as in verse 1 of the Psalm), and deliver me by his judgment out of thine hand." Its peculiar feature is that the enemies on whom the poet imprecates the righteous judgments of God, are men who had formerly been his friends, men for whom he had prayed in their sorrow "with a brother's heart," and who now requited his love with ungrateful hatred. Such an enemy Saul may have been; but we never find any trace of bitterness in David's feelings towards Saul. The generous enemy whose heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's skirt, and who always recognized in Saul the Lord's anointed, would never have called down the judgments of God upon his head. It seems to me, therefore, more probable that the aiders and abettors of Absalom's conspiracy, men like Ahithophel and his associates, are aimed at in the poet's burning words. But all this, and even the authorship itself, must be matter of mere conjecture.

The Psalm falls into three principal divisions; each of which closes with a thanksgiving.

I. Ver. 1-10 1. Cry to God to come forth as a champion armed for his defence (ver. 1-3).

2. Prayer for the confusion and destruction of his enemies (ver. 4-8).

3. Thankful acknowledgment of God's deliverance (ver. 9, 10).

II. Ver. 11-18. 1. Contrast between the love and good-will which he had shown to his enemies, and the bitter hatred with which they had requited him (ver. 11-16).

2. Appeal to God against them, with vows of thanksgiving (ver. 17, 18).

III. Ver. 19-28. 1. Prayer that they may not triumph, with description of their craft and wickedness (ver. 19-21).

2. Again a prayer that God would appear, to vindicate his cause and put them to confusion (ver. 22-26).

3. The joy of all the righteous and of the singer, because God executeth judgment upon the ungodly (ver. 27, 28).

[(A Psalm) of David.]

I. 1 **CONTEND**,<sup>a</sup> O Jehovah, with them that contend with me ;

Fight <sup>b</sup> thou against them that fight against me.

2 Lay hold of shield and buckler,

And stand up as my helper.

3 Draw out <sup>c</sup> also the spear and battle-axe <sup>d</sup>

Against them that pursue me ;

Say unto my soul, " I am thy salvation."

4 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul ;

Let them be driven back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as the chaff before the wind,

And the angel of Jehovah thrusting <sup>e</sup> (them).

6 Let their way be darkness and exceeding slipperiness,<sup>f</sup>

And the angel of Jehovah pursuing them.

2. An amplification of the figure occurring already in the Pentateuch, where God is spoken of as a man of war (Ex. xv. 3 ; Deut. xxxii. 41). The bold anthropomorphic working out of the figure is, however, remarkable. It shows the earnest desire in the poet's mind to realize the fact that God not only taught his fingers to fight, but mixed in the battle,

fighting, as it were, by his side, and assuring him of victory.

4. **LET THEM BE DRIVEN BACK.** Very similar words occur verse 26 ; cf. also xl. 14 [15], and lxx. 2, 3 [3, 4].

5. **AS THE CHAFF.** See i. 4, and cf. xviii. 42 [43] ; lxxxiii. 13 [14].

**THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH**, here, perhaps, as in the last Psalm, not to be



7 For without cause have they hid for me a pit with their net ;<sup>g</sup>

Without cause have they digged a pit for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares,<sup>h</sup>

And let his net which he hath hidden catch himself ;  
Into that very destruction<sup>i</sup> let him fall.

9 So shall my soul exult in Jehovah,  
It shall be joyful in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say,  
“ Jehovah, who is like unto thee ?

Who deliverest the afflicted from him that is too strong  
for him,

Yea the afflicted and the poor from him that spoileth  
him.”

II. 11 Violent witnesses rise up,  
They ask of me things that I know not,

12 They reward me evil for good :  
My soul is bereaved.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was  
sackcloth ;

I humbled my soul with fasting,  
And my prayer — may it return into my own bosom.

understood of any particular angel. Delitzsch supposes the Angel of Israel to be meant, “ who took off Pharaoh’s chariot wheels, so that they drave them heavily.”

7. A common metaphor borrowed from the artifices employed for taking wild beasts. See more in Critical Note.

11. VIOLENT ; i.e. unscrupulous witnesses, *μάτρυες ἄδικοι*, LXX.

12. Very touching are the words “ My soul is bereaved,” I am alone in the world. I, who have ever sought to help the friendless and comfort the afflicted, and who prayed so earnestly for others, am forsaken of all.

13. AND MY PRAYER, etc. These words have been very differently rendered. (1) Some, as Ewald and Delitzsch, un-

derstand them as referring to the posture of prayer, viz. I prayed with my head bowed on my breast ; an interpretation which they support by 1 Kings xviii. 42, where, however, it is not said that Elijah prayed ; nor was this a customary posture in prayer, not to mention that the prayer is said not “ to fall upon,” but “ to return to ” the bosom. Such an interpretation, I confess, seems to me almost ludicrous, and quite out of place here. It is like the Jewish interpretation of Isa. xxvi. 2. See Stanley on 1 Cor. xiv. 16. (2) Others take them as referring to the inward act of prayer, “ in sinu precari ” ; but, again, this is a sense which does not lie in the Hebrew words. (3) “ My prayer returned (or *shall, must* return) into my bosom,” according to

14 As if it had been my friend, my brother, so did I behave myself;

As one who sorroweth for a mother, I bowed down mourning.

15 But when I halted, they rejoiced and gathered themselves together,

They gathered themselves together, smiting<sup>k</sup> (me) when I knew it not.

They did tear (me) and ceased not;

16 With them that are profane in their outlandish mouthings.<sup>1</sup>  
Gnashing upon me with their teeth.

17 O Lord, how long wilt thou see (this) ?

Bring back my soul from their destructions,<sup>m</sup>

My only one from the lions.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation,

I will praise thee among much<sup>n</sup> people.

III. 19 Let not them that are mine enemies falsely<sup>o</sup> rejoice over me,

Neither let them that hate me without a cause wink with the eye.

20 For not peace do they speak,

But against them that are quiet<sup>p</sup> in the land they devise words of deceit.

the usual signification of this and similar phrases (lxxix. 12; Isa. lxxv. 6, 7, etc.), would mean, as Hupfeld remarks, "This was all the return I had for my prayer, that they requited me evil for good." He thinks there is something sarcastic in the expression. This, however, is doubtful. I prefer rendering: "And my prayer — may it return into mine own bosom." The prayer I offered for them is a prayer I might have offered for myself. So true a prayer was it, so full of love, that I could wish nothing more than that the blessings I asked for them should be vouchsafed to me. This agrees, too, with what follows, "As though for my friend or my brother," etc. It may,

perhaps, be illustrated by reference to Matt. x. 13; Luke x. 6.

14. MOURNING; i.e. with all the outward signs of sorrow, especially the garments (as the word particularly denotes), perhaps also the untrimmed beard, unwashed face, etc., which were tokens of Oriental mourning. Comp. xxxviii. 6 [7]; Job i. 20; v. 11, etc.

15, 16. The cruel requital of all this affection and sympathy.

16. On the interpretation of this difficult verse see the Critical Note.

17. MY ONLY ONE. See note on xxii. 20.

18. CONGREGATION, or "assembly," or "church," the Greek equivalent being ἐκκλησία.

- 21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me ;  
 They said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen (it).  
 22 Thou hast seen, O Jehovah : keep not silence ;  
 O Lord, be not far from me.  
 23 Arouse thyself and awake to my judgment,  
 My God and my Lord, to my cause.  
 24 Judge me according to thy righteousness, O Jehovah  
 my God,  
 And let them not rejoice over me.

22. THOU HAST SEEN, with reference to the "our eye HATH SEEN" in the preceding verse.

This latter part of the Psalm is on the whole calmer than the former, as if the spirit had found rest in pouring out its complaints. Though the singer again calls for confusion on his enemies, the expressions are not so apparently vindictive as at the beginning of the Psalm. Comp. ver. 25, 26, with ver. 4-6.

But how are we to account for such prayers for vengeance at all? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth and one hundred and ninth, and the imprecations in these form a terrible climax. In the last, no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused, as being animated by the "spirit of Elias," — a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they stereotyped forms, in which the spirit of Christian devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An uninstructed fastidiousness, it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have

tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; but the Hebrew optative, which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honor, and remind us that if we do not sympathize with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder.

Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ (Luke ix. 55). "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of extermination with idolaters, and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and

25 Let them not say in their heart, 'Aha, so would we have<sup>a</sup> it';

Let them not say, 'We have swallowed him up.'

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together,  
That rejoice at my hurt;

Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor  
That magnify themselves against me.

27 Let them shout for joy and rejoice

Who have pleasure in my righteousness,

And let them say alway, 'Jehovah be magnified,

Who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.

identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration" was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable.

It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New; as, for instance, in Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt not avenge," etc., though even there there is a limitation "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New, as when St. Paul says (2 Tim. iv. 14), "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works": [if we accept the optative of the Text. Rec., though the future ἀποδώσει, for which there is good authority, slightly softens the passage]; or when he exclaims (Acts xxiii. 3), "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are not curses upon individuals, but, in fact, solemn utterances of the great truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of par-

ticular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honor Moses, but to dishonor Christ (Matt. v. 43; xix. 8). On the other hand we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longing for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance.

Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply the problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds, is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes.



28 So shall my tongue speak of thy righteousness,  
(And) thy praise all the day long.

Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been, not "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them"; "Blot them out of thy book"; but rather, with him who hung on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

<sup>a</sup> רִיב, properly used of a suit in a court of justice; here, however, of a decision by force of arms. Instead of the more common form רִיבָה רִיבֵי, we have here אֶת רִיבֵי אֵךְ, being here the prep., as Isa. xlix. 25.

<sup>b</sup> לָחֶם. Kal. instead of Niph. Cf. lvi. 2, 3.

מִגֶּן, the buckler, or smaller shield. צָנָה, the large shield, which covered the whole person; both mentioned to convey the idea of defence of all kinds. See v. 13, and cf. 1 Kings x. 16.

בְּצִדְתִּי, "in my help," i.e. as my helper, in that character, cf. Ex. xviii. 4; Prov. iii. 26. So also Ex. vi. 3, בְּאֵל שֹׁרֵר, "in the character of the Almighty God." The ב is the so-called *Beth Essentiae*, used to introduce the predicate. (Gesen. § 154, 3a). Possibly xxxi. 22 is to be explained in the same way, "in a strong city," i.e. in such a character God has been to me, himself like a fortified city.

<sup>c</sup> הִרְקֵךְ, "draw out," properly from a sheath (as a sword). But there is no evidence that spears were so carried. It may therefore be used in a wider and more general sense, as Abraham is said to "draw out" his trained men, Gen. xiv. 14.

<sup>d</sup> כָּפַר. There is no reason, so far as the constr. is concerned, why we should not (with the older translators generally) take this as the imper. of the verb, with an ellipse of הִרְקֵךְ. The word is used absol. Isa. xxii. 22. So the LXX, σύγλαισον; Targ., כִּפְרוּךְ. There is force, however, in Hupfeld's objection that לִקְרָאָה indicates the going forth to meet an enemy, an attack, and not merely the passive resistance implied in the expression "bar the way." Hence he, Ewald, and others, following the hint of Kimchi (חֲשִׁיב מַכְלֵי מִלְחָמָה), take the word as a noun = σάγαις, "battle-axe" (a Persian and Scythian weapon mentioned by Herod. and Xen.), Armen. *sacr*, and this interpretation is further favored by the accents.

<sup>e</sup> הִתְחַהּ . . . רִדְּפָם. Hupfeld suggests, with much reason, that these words have changed places. We want the suffix with the first, and moreover הִתְחַהּ, "thrusting," does not agree with the figure of the chaff.

<sup>f</sup> הִתְחַהּ לְקִרְיָה, an emphatic form by reduplication for the simpler חֲלָקִיָּה, lxxiii. 18, as in Jer. xxiii. 12.

שִׁתְּחַת רְשָׁתָם<sup>8</sup>, “pit of their net,” i.e. a pit lightly covered over, and with a net concealed in it, in order to take wild animals. But it is not improbable that שִׁתְּחַת belongs to the second clause of the verse.

<sup>h</sup> לֹא יָרִיעַ, a sort of adverbial clause, *improviso*, “at unawares,” as Prov. v. 6; Isa. xlvii. 11; though probably the relat. is understood. Comp. לֹא יִחַמֵּל, “pitilessly,” Isa. xxx. 14.

<sup>i</sup> בְּשׂוֹאָה ר' ב'. I see no reason why we should not render as the E. V. does, following all the older translators. The pron. is placed in app. with the noun, by way of emphasis (see ix. 7), and the word שׂוֹאָה refers to the previous clause, “the net which he hath hidden”; so that it is not necessary to supply the ellipse with the Syr., “in foveam quam foderunt cadant.” Others render, “with a violent overthrow let him fall into it (i.e. the net).” So Ewald explains: “Im Ungewitter das ihn dabei treffen soll.”

<sup>k</sup> נִכְרִים, ἀπ. λεγ., from a form נִכָּה, like נִצָּה, רִעָה. The meaning, however, is doubtful. LXX, μάστιγες, so also the Syr. and Vulg. But Symm. better, πλῆκται, and Jerome, *percutientes*. The Chald. paraphrases, “the wicked who smite me with their words.” Kimchi gave the word a passive sense, “the smitten,” i.e. poor, miserable, worthless beings; whence “the objects” of our version. But it is better to take it as active, “smiters,” i.e. either in a literal sense, as denoting the violence of his enemies; or figuratively, as referring to their malicious use of their tongues.

וְלֹא יָרִיעָה may either mean, “And I was innocent,” or, like the יָרִיעַ above (ver. 8), “without my being aware of it.”

<sup>l</sup> בַּחֲנֹפִי ל' מ'. Very difficult. The word מְעִיג in 1 Kings xvii. 12, the only other passage where it occurs, means “a cake.” Hence ל' מ' is interpreted by Gesen. and others to mean, hangers-on at the tables of the rich (lit. “cake-mockers”), whose business it was, by witticisms and buffoonery, to make entertainment for the guests, and who got their dinner in return, like the Gr. ψωμοκόλακες, κνισσοκόλακες, and the Mediaev. Lat. *buccellarii*. Then the words would mean, “amongst the profanest (חֲנֹף never means “hypocritical,” Gataker, *Adverss. Misc.* c. 22) parasites,” or, as our version, “mockers in feasts.” But לְעִנְיָ, in the only other passage where it occurs (Isa. xxviii. 11), means “stammerings,” or rather “barbarisms,” or the confused, unintelligible speaking of foreigners (it is quite unnecessary to make the word an adj. as Gesen. does). That this is the meaning in Isa. xxviii. is clear from the parallel לְשׁוֹן אֲחֵרֶת. Comp. Isa. xxxiii. 19, עִם נִלְעַג לְשׁוֹן parallel with עִם עֲמָקֵי שְׁפָה. And it is remarkable that none of the older expositors here give מְעִיג, the signif. “cake.” They all evidently take לְעִנְיָ

together, in the general sense of “mockery,” or the like. LXX, *ἑξεμυκτήρισάν με μυκτηρισμόν*; Symm., *ἐν ὑποκρίσει, φθέγμασι πεπλασμένοις*; Jerome, *in simulatione verborum fictorum*; Chald., “with derisive words of flattery.” It is better, therefore, to refer מְעִיג to the root עִיג, in the sense “to turn, twist,” etc. Cf. Talmud. לְשׁוֹן עִגָּה, of a foreign language. Thus the rendering would be, “with the profane in their foreign stammerings,” or “amongst profane, foreign, barbarous stammerers.”

With regard to the constr. of חֲנִפִּי, that must depend on the meaning we attach to לְעִגִּי. If this be an adjective, then the first adj. prefixed in *stat. constr.* must have a partitive, and according to the Heb. idiom, a superlative signif., “Among the profane (i.e. the profanest) of feast-mockers.” Cf. Prov. xiv. 1; Ezek. vii. 24; Micah vii. 4. If, on the other hand, לְעִגִּי be a noun, then ל' מ' may be considered as one word, and depend immediately upon the adj. “Among those who are profane in their barbarous stammerings, outlandish mouthings,” etc; or, keeping the play upon words in the Hebrew, we might render ל' מ' “who jabber gibberish,” as has been suggested to me by a friend.

<sup>m</sup> שְׂאִירָהֶם, a form occurring only here; apparently a masc. plur. from the fem. שְׂאִירָה (ver. 8).

<sup>n</sup> רַבִּים, “numerous,” as in Gen. xviii. 18; Deut. ix. 14.

<sup>o</sup> שֶׁקֶר, “falsely,” i.e. without any just cause, clearly parallel to חֲנָם, which follows.

<sup>p</sup> רִגְעֵי א', adj., as from רִגַּע, not found elsewhere; but nouns from the same root occur Isa. xxviii. 12; Jer. vi. 16.

<sup>q</sup> נַפְשֵׁנוּ, lit. “It is our pleasure, our desire.” Comp. אֲרִבִּי בְּנַפְשִׁי, xvii. 9.

## PSALM XXXVI.

THIS Psalm is not so distinct in its features that we can assign it to any particular occasion in the life of David, or associate it with any definite period of Jewish history. It has, as De Wette has remarked, some points of resemblance with xii. and xiv., but there is no reason to conclude, as he does, that the wicked who are here described are heathen oppressors.

The Psalm opens with a striking picture of what a wicked man is, who abandons himself, without check or remorse, to the inspirations of his own evil heart (ver. 1-4).

Next, as if oppressed and terrified with the picture which he has drawn of secure and thoughtful wickedness, the holy Psalmist turns with a quick revulsion of feeling to him whose love and truth are at all times a sure defence. Here he pours out all the fulness of his heart. Words seem to fail him as there rise before him, in all their length and breadth, the loving-kindness, the faithfulness, the righteousness of Jehovah (ver. 5-9).

Lastly, with his heart full of what God is, he prays that God would show his loving-kindness and his righteousness to those who, like himself, were upright in heart, and would defeat the designs of the wicked. He concludes with the confident acknowledgment that his prayer has been heard (ver. 10-12).

[For the Precentor. (A Psalm) of David, the Servant of Jehovah.]

- 1 THE wicked hath an oracle of transgression in his heart,<sup>a</sup>  
There is no fear of God before his eyes.
- 2 For he flattereth him in his eyes,  
To find out his iniquity, (and) to hate (it).<sup>b</sup>
- 3 The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit;  
He hath left off to be wise (and) to do good.
- 4 Wickedness doth he devise upon his bed,  
He setteth himself in a way that is not good,  
He abhorreth not evil.

1. IN HIS HEART. The evidence of the older versions (with the exception of the Chald. and Symm.) is in favor of this reading. Transgression is personified, and is represented as uttering its counsels to the wicked man, and finding the same ready obedience in his heart, as the voice of God himself in that of the good man.

(The word מִנִּי, "utterance" or "oracle," is everywhere else used of a *divine* utterance). Hence there is no fear of God before his eyes; nay, so blinded is he by his own evil heart, that he thinks God to be verily such an one as himself. In his eyes, i.e. in his opinion or belief, God flatters him or deals smoothly with him, with respect to finding out his iniquity, so as to punish it, and show his abhorrence of it. Such seems to be the general scope of the passage, but its

interpretation is very doubtful. See a full discussion in the Critical Note.

1-4 describe generally the character of the ungodly; first, the sin of his heart (ver. 1, 2); then the sin of his lips (ver. 3); lastly, the sin of his hands, the evil schemes which he devises and executes (ver. 4): thought, word, and deed, as in xvii. 3, 4.

As there is a climax in the whole description of the evil man, so especially is there a progress from bad to worse in verse 3, 4. (1) He hath *left off* to do good; (2) on his bed he *meditates* evil (iv. 4; Micah ii. 1); (3) he resolutely *sets himself* to do evil; (4) his very conscience is hardened, so that he does evil without repugnance or misgiving.

4. UPON HIS BED. "Nocte cum maxime scilicet vacet animus, tempus



5 O Jehovah, in the heavens is thy loving-kindness,  
Thy faithfulness (reacheth) unto the clouds :

6 Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God,  
Thy judgments are a great deep.

Man and beast dost thou preserve, O Jehovah.

7 How precious is thy loving-kindness, O God !

And the children of men in the shadow of thy wings find  
refuge :

est, ut ad se homo redeat et meliora cogitet, si etiam toto die male vixisset." — *Rosenmüller*. And Calvin remarks : "Reprobos consilia male agendi intus coquere dicit, atque ita quamvis nulla se illecebra objiciat, nullum eos incitet malum exemplum, sibi ipsis esse scelerum autores ac magistros absque alieno impulsu."

HE ABHORRETH NOT ; i.e. is far enough from rejecting any instrument, however sinful, for attaining his purposes.

5-9. The transition from this description of the wicked to the praise of God's goodness and faithfulness, is certainly very abrupt ; and we can feel no surprise that Hupfeld should be inclined to doubt an original connection between the two portions of the Psalm. Yet may we not account for the abruptness here, by a very natural recoil of feeling ? No good man can ever delight to portray the workings of a heart alienated from God. If the evil he sees around him force him for a time to trace it to its hidden source, or watch its outward development, with the more joy and thankfulness will he find refuge (see ver. 7) from its hideous shadow in the faithfulness and goodness of God.

5. Words seem to fail him when he would speak of the loving-kindness, the faithfulness, the righteousness of God. (See the same attributes associated in like manner in xxxiii. 4, 5, and there also in connection with God's providential care of his creatures.) The universe itself is too little to set forth their greatness. (Comp. ciii. 11 ; Eph. iii. 18.)

6. MOUNTAINS OF GOD (so "cedars of God," lxxx. 10 [11]). . . . A GREAT

DEEP (cf. Rom. xi. 33, ὡς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ), — the mightiest things in creation, whether in the height above or in the depth beneath. Not, however, are "mountains of God" to be considered as only = "highest mountains" ; but, like "the trees of Jehovah" (civ. 16), which are explained as "the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted" (comp. Numb. xxiv. 6) ; and "the river of God" (lxv. 9 [10]), i.e. the rain which he sends down upon earth ; so here the mountains are spoken of as the work of his hand. So too in Gen. xiii. 10, "the garden of Jehovah" is not merely "a very fair garden," but the garden of Eden which he himself planted. The phrases "to God," "to Jehovah" (לֵאלֹהִים לַיהוָה), are different, as in these the preposition "to" = "in the sight of," or "before" ; and so in the New Testament ἀστειος τῷ Θεῷ (Acts vii. 20), is "fair before God," not "divinely fair," or "exceeding fair."

7. The remembrance of God's goodness, faithfulness, and righteousness, and of his care both of man and beast, makes the singer to burst forth in holy ecstasy : "How precious is thy loving-kindness, O God." This preciousness (cf. cxxxix. 17) is then further enlarged upon. God is viewed as the gracious host who provides for all who come to his house and his table. See the same figure, xxiii. 5 ; xxxiv. 8 [9]. Here the *loving-kindness* of God is the great subject of praise, because in this his *faithfulness* (in fulfilling his promises) and his *righteousness* manifested in rewarding the righteous (as well as in the punishment of the wicked) may be included. In the same way when St. John says, "God is love," it

- 8 They are satisfied with the fatness of thy house,  
 And thou makest them drink of the brook of thy pleasures;  
 9 For with thee is the fountain of life :  
 In thy light do we see light.  
 10 Oh continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee,  
 And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.  
 11 Let not the foot of pride come against me,  
 Neither let the hand of the wicked drive me away.  
 12 There have the workers of wickedness fallen ;  
 They are thrust down, and are not able to rise.

is because love, in fact, embraces and implies all other of the divine attributes.

**CHILDREN OF MEN** ; purposely the most general expression that could be employed, — every one who feels his weakness and his sinfulness, and with that feeling seeks refuge in God.

**SHADOW OF THY WINGS.** See on xvii. 8.

8. **FATNESS OF THY HOUSE** ; i.e. generally the rich provision made (comp. Job xxxvi. 16 and Psalm xxiii. 5). If there is an allusion to the Temple, as Hupfeld thinks, "fatness" would = "fat sacrifices," and men would be regarded as the priests in the house, after the analogy of Jer. xxxi. 14.

9. These are some of the most wonderful words in the Old Testament. Their fulness of meaning no commentary can ever exhaust. They are, in fact, the kernel and the anticipation of much of the profoundest teaching of St. John.

**THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE** ; i.e. of all life, both animal and spiritual. God

only has life in himself, life underived, as our Lord says, John v. 26.

**IN THY LIGHT.** Comp. Dan. ii. 22, "The light dwelleth with him"; and 1 John i. 5-7. Out of God all is darkness. The creature is darkness, our own hearts and consciences are darkness, our duties are darkness, our deeds are darkness (John iii. 19, 20), the very order and constitution of the world, yea the word of God itself, except as seen in his light, is darkness.

10. **LOVING-KINDNESS.** For the third time he dwells on this attribute of God, and again associates it, as in verses 5, 6, with the "righteousness" of God.

11. **DRIVE ME AWAY** ; lit. "make me to wander," sc. from the temple and the land ; see 1 Kings xxi. 8.

12. **THERE**, pointing as it were to the scene. The field on which God's righteous judgment has been manifested in the overthrow of the wicked is before his eyes. "David quasi e sublimi fidei specula procul aspicit eorum interitum, nec minus secure de eo pronunciat, quam si prope instaret." — *Calvin*.

<sup>a</sup> לִבִּי, "*my heart*." So the text at present stands in the Hebrew, and in accordance with this reading two renderings have been usual of the former part of the verse : (1) "That which transgression saith to the wicked is within my heart, i.e. forms the subject of my present meditation." So apparently the Chald., and so Calvin, Rosen., Delitzsch, and others. The objection to this is, that the revelation which transgression is thus supposed to make to the wicked does not follow after

all, but only a description of that transgression and its effects. (2) "An utterance concerning the transgression of the wicked is within my heart." So Symm., *φησὶ περὶ ἀσυνθεσίας τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς ἔνδοθεν ἡ καρδία μου*. So Gesen., De Wette, Stier, and others. If the last rendering could be defended by the usage of נִאֲמָה in other passages, it would at once remove all difficulty. But נִאֲמָה, *effatum, oraculum*, is never followed by the object or subject of the utterance, but always by the author or person *from* whom the utterance proceeds. It would be permitted therefore by usage to say, "The utterance of transgression" (i.e. which transgression makes, transgression being personified), but it would not be permitted by usage to say: "An utterance concerning transgression," etc.

There can be very little doubt that we ought to read לִבִּי, instead of לִבִּי, a reading which is supported by the LXX, Vulg., Syr., Arab., and Jerome, and which is found even in some mss. Then the rendering will be, "The wicked hath an oracle of transgression within his heart, i.e. his wickedness is to him a source of evil counsel, evil designs," etc. The only objection to this is the antichrestic use of נִאֲמָה, which everywhere else is spoken of a divine utterance, and this may be balanced against the difficulty above mentioned of rendering, "A saying concerning transgression," as in either case we have an unusual mode of expression, so that the rendering, "That which God saith concerning the transgression of the wicked is within my heart," may perhaps, after all, be defensible.

It has also been suggested to take נִאֲמָה by itself as a description, or title, of the Psalm: "(This is) a divine oracle. The transgression of the wicked is in my heart," i.e. "I am pondering it, that I may tell of it to others."

<sup>b</sup> This second verse is still more perplexing than the first; for first, what is the subject of הַחֲלִילִי? Is it transgression which flatters the sinner, or is it the sinner who flatters himself in his own eyes, or who deals smoothly, hypocritically towards God, in *his* sight? or is it God, who, in his (the sinner's) eyes, i.e. in his opinion, flatters or deals gently with him? And next, what is the meaning of לְמַצְאֵינִי, and of the subordinated infinitive לְשֹׁנָה? Now in the first place, בְּעֵינָיו in this clause ought to correspond with בְּעֵינָיו above; "in his eyes," i.e. in the eyes of the sinner, according to his belief. (So in a passage, generally misunderstood, in the Proverbs (i. 17), "Surely in the eyes (in the opinion) of every bird, the net is spread in vain.") Next, the phrase לְמַצְאֵינִי occurs elsewhere of the *punishment* of iniquity, Gen. xlv. 16; Hos. xii. 9. (Hence Rashi and Aben-Ezra have rendered, "He

flattereth himself in his own eyes, till God find out his iniquity, and hate it"; and our A. V. "till his iniquity be found to be hateful.") Lastly, לְשׂוֹנֵא is evidently a merely subordinated infinitive, further describing 'לֵמַ' ע', as below, in like manner "to be wise, to do good." There can be very little doubt, then, that if מֵצֵא ע' means "to find out, so as to punish sin," the subject of the verb הִתְחַלִּיק must be אֱלֹהִים, "God hath dealt smoothly with him, as he thinks, with reference (לְ, as often) to finding out," etc.

Ewald and Stier, however, both take מֵצֵא ע' in the sense of "reaching, attaining to his wickedness," i.e. gaining the evil objects he has in view (and so Kimchi, who refers to 1 Sam. xx. 21, 36, where, however, the verb is not followed by פֶּיִן). The former renders: "It flattereth him in his eyes, to accomplish his iniquity, to hate," i.e. so as to gratify his hatred. And similarly Gesen., "ut odium foveat;" but this, it seems to me, is to give too much prominence to the manifestly subordinate verb לְשׂוֹנֵא. On the whole, therefore, I am inclined to explain: For he (God) seems to deal smoothly with the sinner in his own opinion, so far as the punishment and hatred of his sin is concerned. So in the main Hofmann and Hupfeld, except that the last connects the second clause of the verse with the words, "There is no fear of God before his eyes," treating the first clause as parenthetical.

I subjoin the renderings of the ancient versions: Chald., "Wickedness saith to the sinner, in the midst of my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth him (לִיָּה, not therefore "blanditur sibi," as in the Polyglot) in his eyes, to discover sins, to hate instruction. Syr., "The transgressor contemplates wickedness in his heart, because there is no fear of God before his eyes. For it is hateful in his eyes to leave his sins and to hate them." LXX, "φησὶν ὁ παράνομος τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ· οὐκ ἔστι φόβος Θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ. ὅτι ἐδόλωσεν ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ τοῦ εὑρεῖν τὴν ἀνομίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ μισῆσαι." Jerome, "Dixit scelus impii in medio cordis ejus; Non est timor Dei ante oculos ejus. Quia dolose egit adversus eum in oculis suis; Ut inveniret iniquitatem ejus ad odiendum." Arab., "He that breaketh the law says that he will sin within himself, and there is no fear of God before his eyes, for he hath dealt treacherously in his sight, when he discovers his sin and hates it."



## PSALM XXXVII.

A PSALM wherein the righteousness of God's providence is vindicated in his administration of the world. The Psalmist's own heart had no doubt at one time been shaken by the apparent successes and triumphs of the ungodly, for it is a common temptation to distrust God when we see "the ungodly in great prosperity." The advice which the Psalmist gives is "to wait," "to trust in the Lord," to look at the end, and to observe how even in this life God manifests his righteousness, in rewarding the godly and punishing the wicked. This sentiment is repeated in various forms, and with much beauty of expression. The Psalm has something of a proverbial character about it, owing no doubt in some measure to the fact that the writer chose to fetter himself by an acrostical arrangement; for this is one of the alphabetical Psalms, like Psalms xxv. and xxxiv.

The structure of the Psalm is exceedingly regular. With few exceptions, the separate portions, as marked by the letters of the alphabet, consist of four members.

Tertullian calls the Psalm *providentiae speculum*; Isidore, *potio contra murmur*; Luther, *vestis piorum cui adscriptum*; *Hic sanctorum patientia est*.

[ (A Psalm) of David. ]

- 1 **α** FRET not thyself because of the evil-doers,  
Be not envious because of the workers of iniquity.
- 2 For like the grass they shall soon be cut down,<sup>a</sup>  
And like the green herb shall they wither.
- 3 **β** Trust thou in Jehovah, and do good :  
Dwell in the land, and enjoy safety.<sup>b</sup>
- 4 Delight thyself also in Jehovah,  
And he shall give thee the petitions of thy heart.

1. The whole verse is to be found almost word for word, Prov. xxiv. 19; the latter part of it also, Prov. iii. 31; xxiii. 17; xxiv. 1. Comp. lxxiii. 3.

3. Trust in God is the true antidote for the fretfulness and envy which are before forbidden.

DWELL IN THE LAND—for the promises to Israel, and Israel's glory as a nation, were bound up with the land.

4. DELIGHT THYSELF in him, and so thou wilt choose and love that which he chooses and loves: therefore he will give thee thy heart's desires.

- 5 **α** Cast thy way on Jehovah,  
And trust in him ; and he will bring (it) to pass.
- 6 Yea he will bring forth thy righteousness as the light,  
And thy judgment as the noon-day.
- 7 **γ** Hold thee still in Jehovah, and hope in him ;  
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth (in)  
his way,  
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
- 8 **η** Cease from anger and let go wrath ;  
Fret not thyself, only to do evil.
- 9 For wicked doers shall be cut off ;  
But they that wait on Jehovah, *they* shall inherit the land.
- 10 **γ** Yea, yet but a little while and the wicked is not,  
And thou shalt diligently consider his place and he is  
not (there).
- 11 But the meek shall possess the land,  
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
- 12 **γ** The wicked deviseth evil against the righteous,  
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.
- 13 The Lord laugheth at him,  
For he hath seen that his day is coming.
- 14 **η** The wicked have drawn the sword,  
They have also bent their bow,  
That they may cast down the afflicted and the poor,  
That they may slay them that are upright in the way.

5. CAST THY WAY. Cf. xxii. 8 [9], and St. Peter's *πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιβρίψαντες ἐπ' αὐτόν*, 1 Pet. v. 7.

6. HE WILL BRING FORTH ; sc. like the sun going forth (82<sup>γ</sup>) in the morning. Cf. Jer. li. 10.

7. HOLD THEE STILL (so well rendered in our Prayer-book version), lit. Be silent for him (E.V. "Rest in" ; Gen. "Wait patiently upon"). A word expressive of that calm resignation which leaves itself absolutely in the hands of God. This hushed, bowed temper of spirit best befits us. Here is the best cure for dissatisfaction with the present, and for anxiety about the future, that

we leave both in the hands of God. Here is our highest wisdom even for the life of our spirits, that we stay ourselves not upon outward acts or inward impulses, but on him who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

8. ONLY TO DO EVIL ; i.e. nothing but evil can come of it. (So Calvin "fieri aliter non posse quin ad peccandum impellat.")

11. THE MEEK. See on ix. 12.

THE LAND. Cf. xxv. 13 and Matt. v. 5, where, however, the range is wider, "shall inherit the earth."

13. LAUGHETH, cf. ii. 4.

- 15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart,  
And their bows shall be broken.
- 16 ▢ Better is a little that the righteous man hath,  
Than the riches of many wicked.
- 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,  
But Jehovah upholdeth the righteous.
- 18 ▸ Jehovah knoweth the days of the perfect,  
And their inheritance shall be forever.
- 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,  
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
- 20 ▢ But the wicked shall perish,  
And the enemies of Jehovah be as the glory of the  
pastures :  
They consume — in smoke they consume away.
- 21 ▢ The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again ;  
But the righteous is gracious, and giveth.
- 22 For they that are blessed of him shall possess the land ;  
And they that are cursed of him shall be cut off.
- 23 ▢ From Jehovah (is it) that a man's steps are established,  
So that he hath pleasure in his way.
- 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down,  
For Jehovah upholdeth his hand.

HIS DAY, cf. cxxxvii. 7; Job xviii. 20; Jer. l. 27, 31; Obad. 12.

16. See a similar sentiment, Prov. xv. 16.

18. KNOWETH THE DAYS; i.e. watcheth over, careth for, lovingly orders all that befalls them. See the same use of the verb, i. 6; xxxi. 7 [8], compared with 15 [16], "My times are in thy hand."

20. THE GLORY OF THE PASTURES OR MEADOWS (*not* of the flocks, cf. lxxv. 13 [14]; Isa. xxx. 23); i.e. the grass and flowers.

IN SMOKE THEY CONSUME, etc. This is generally supposed to refer to the preceding figure, the grass being conceived of as cut down and heaped together, and set on fire; but this is not necessary. Two *distinct* figures are employed: the first that of the glory of the grass fading

away naturally; the next taken from objects destroyed by fire. From not observing this, probably came the other rendering, "like the fat of lambs," viz. which was consumed on the altars, and so ascended in smoke.

21, 22. The blessing and the curse of God, as seen in the different lots of the righteous and the wicked. The wicked, through God's curse resting on him, is reduced to poverty, so that he is compelled to borrow, and cannot pay; whereas, the righteous hath even abundance, not only for his own wants, but for the wants of others. It is the promise (Deut. xv. 6; xxviii. 12, 44), turned into a proverb.

23. He that would walk securely, and so as to please the Lord, must trust in the Lord to guide him. (Cf. Prov. xx.

- 25 **א** I have been young, and (now) am old ;  
 Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,  
 Nor his seed begging bread.
- 26 All the day long is he gracious and lendeth,  
 And his seed is blessed.
- 27 **ב** Depart from evil, and do good ;  
 And (so shalt thou) dwell for evermore.
- 28 For Jehovah loveth judgment,  
 And forsaketh not his beloved.
- [? **כ**] Forever<sup>c</sup> they are preserved ;  
 But the seed of the wicked is cut off.
- 29 The righteous shall possess the land  
 And dwell therein forever.
- 30 The mouth of the righteous uttereth wisdom,  
 And his tongue speaketh judgment.
- 31 The law of his God is in his heart :  
 None of his steps shall slide.
- 32 **ז** The wicked lieth in wait for the righteous,  
 And seeketh (occasion) to slay him.
- 33 Jehovah will not leave him in his hand,  
 Nor condemn him when he is judged.
- 34 **פ** Wait for Jehovah and keep his way,  
 So shall he exalt thee to possess the land :  
 When the wicked are cut off thou shalt see (it).

24, and xvi. 9.) The sentiment is put in a general form, but the righteous man, as he appears in the Psalm ("der Mann wie er sein soll"), is meant, as is clear from the next verse.

25. On this Bakius observes: "Promissiones corporales intelligendae sunt cum exceptione crucis et castigationis." But it should be remembered that temporal rewards were distinctly held out to the Old Testament saint, and he accepted them as a proof of God's righteous dealing even in this world.

26. See above, verse 21, and comp. cxii. 5. The promise in Deut., quoted in the note on verse 21, no doubt it was

which made this characteristic of *lending* so prominent.

30. UTTERETH ; lit. "meditateth." The word is used both of thought and utterance. See note on i. 2.

31. The law within is the guiding principle which directs his steps.

33. Men may condemn, but God acquits. Here, as in 1 Cor. iv. 3, the righteous judgment of the Great Judge is opposed to the *ἀνακρίνειν* of human judgment (*ἡμέρα*). So Tertullian: "Si condemnatur a mundo, absolvimur a Deo."

34. WAIT ON JEHOVAH. Keep thine eye fixed on him (cf. *ἀποβλέπειν*, Heb.



- 35 **י** I have seen a wicked man full of violence,  
 And spreading himself like a green tree that hath  
 never been moved ;
- 36 Yet he passed away, and lo he was not :  
 And I sought him, but he could not be found.
- 37 **ש** Observe the perfect (man), and behold the upright,  
 That the man of peace hath a posterity ;
- 38 But the transgressors are destroyed together ;  
 The posterity of the wicked is cut off.
- 39 **ה** The salvation also of the righteous is of Jehovah,  
 Their fortress in the time of trouble.
- 40 And Jehovah helpeth them and rescueth them,  
 He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them,  
 Because they have found refuge in him.

xii. 2) despite the prosperity of the wicked, and the persecutions which thou sufferest.

THOU SHALT SEE IT, or thou shalt look upon it with satisfaction.

35. A TREE THAT HATH NEVER BEEN MOVED (one word in Hebrew), or "a tree growing in its native soil," one that has never been transplanted or disturbed, that has therefore struck its roots deep, and shot out with luxuriant strength.

37. HATH A POSTERITY. As opposed to the wicked in the next clause, whose posterity is cut off. Then it would be="Thou shalt see thy children's children and peace upon Israel." Or instead of "posterity," the word may mean "the future," the end that yet awaits him.

40. He *delivereth* them ; because they *trust* in him. The whole lesson of the Psalm lies in these words.

<sup>a</sup> **יָמֵיהֶם**, fut. Kal of **יָמַל** = **אָמַל**, in the sense, "they wither away," the form being pausal for **יָמֵיהֶם**, as Job xxiv. 24 (Gesen. § 67). But it may perhaps be fut. Niph. for **יָמֵיהֶם**, נָמַל.

<sup>b</sup> **רַעְיָה אֱמֻנָה**. These words have been very variously rendered. The Chald. has **רַעְיָה אֱמֻנָה**, *fortis esto in fide* ; LXX, **ποιμανθήσῃ ἐπὶ τῷ πλούτῳ αὐτῆς** ; so too the Vulg., *pasceris in divitiis ejus* ; Symm., **ποιμαίνου διηνεκῶς** ; but Jerome, *pascere fide* ; Syr., **ܩܘܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܘܢܐ**, *quaere fidem* ; Aq., **νέμου πίστιν** ; Luther, "nähre dich redlich" ; Diodati, "vi pasturerai in confidenza" ; Zunz and Delitzsch, "pfllege Treue" ; Ewald, "geniessend Sicherheit." The Hebrew will admit, indeed, of three renderings : (1) Cherish confidence (sc. in God), cf. Hab. ii. 4 ; and so Maurer explains, *sta in fide Jovae*. (2) Cherish or delight in truth and faithfulness, etc. towards men (so Gesen. *delectare veritate*). (3) Enjoy, or delight in, security, **אֱמֻנָה** being taken in the same sense as in Isa. xxxiii. 6. The verb **רַעְיָה**, with accus. of pers. "to

be a friend of," Prov. xiii. 20, with accus. of thing, "to have pleasure in," Prov. xv. 14.

The second member of this verse, though the words are imperat., has something of a future coloring, = Trust in Jehovah and do good, *so shalt* thou dwell in the land and enjoy safety. For "dwelling in the land" is everywhere *promised* as a special blessing, xxv. 13; Deut. xxxiii. 28, etc. Comp. verses 9, 11, 22, 29, 34, of this Psalm. That the imperative in certain cases may stand for the future is certain (Gesen. § 127). It depends, however, on the meaning we give to רָצָה, whether we take these as strict imperatives, or as imperatives with a future meaning. If we render "cherish faithfulness," then, as this is clearly an exhortation, so must the preceding imperative be; "dwell in the land," i.e. regard it as a duty, occupy there the position in which God has placed you as a member of the theocracy, and be thankful that he has so placed you, and accordingly "cherish faithfulness, or confidence, in him."

° Up to this point the alphabetical arrangement has been strictly preserved. Here, apparently, the ט has dropped out. The structure of the Psalm is, on the whole, so regular, that there can be no doubt that the ט strophe would begin with the second distich of this verse. We should then have the ט and the ט strophes, each consisting of a tetrastich. Hence Ewald supposes the words עֲשֵׂי טוֹב to have dropped out. Others would supply עֲוִילִים, which occurs several times in Job (Iitz. עֲרִיצִים), and read נִשְׁמְרֵי instead of נִשְׁמְרֵי, which finds some support in the LXX, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα φυλαχθήσονται, ἄνομοι (B. ἄμωμοι) δὲ ἐκδιωχθήσονται, and Symm., ἄνομοι ἐξαρθήσονται. But עֲוִילִים or עֲרִיצִים is not a word which occurs in the Psalms, and עֲרִיצִים is too special a word for the context. Delitzsch, I believe, is right in suggesting that the ל in לְעוֹלָם goes for nothing, and that the ט of עוֹלָם is the acrostic letter, just as in verse 39 the ט strophe begins with וְהִשְׁוַעַת, where the ו goes for nothing.

## PSALM XXXVIII.

THIS Psalm tells the story of a bitter suffering. The suffering is both in body and in mind. The body is wasted by a cruel and loathsome disease, and the mind is full of anguish, arising partly from a deep sense of sin, and partly from the fear of relentless and now rejoicing enemies. Body and mind, in such circumstances, act and

react upon one another. Mental anguish impairs the strength of the body; and bodily suffering and weakness make us less able to face with steady and resolute courage the horrors which crowd upon the mind.

To add to his distress, the sufferer is deserted even of his friends. They to whose kind offices he might naturally have looked at such a time; they who had been his friends in his health and prosperity, and who might now have watched by his sick bed, and spoken words of comfort to him in his sorrow, turned coldly away, and left him alone with his grief. A burning fever consumed him (ver. 7), his heart beat hotly, his eyes failed him, the bitter remembrance of his sin was with him; there was the consciousness and the fear of God's displeasure, and, as if this were not enough, there was, besides all this, the utter loneliness, never so hard to bear as in such a season of bodily and mental prostration; the weary couch, never so weary as when no hand is there to smooth it; the pain of the disease far more acutely felt, because none offered sympathy; the terrors of conscience and of the imagination aggravated, because they had to be endured in solitude. Suffering seems here to have reached its height. But out of the very midst of the furnace the sufferer can say, "Lord, before thee is all my desire — in thee, O Jehovah, have I hoped"; can cry with all the earnestness of a faith purified by affliction, "Leave me not, be not far from me, O Lord, my Salvation."

The Psalm may be said to consist of three principal parts, each of which opens with an address to God. Each of these contains an appeal to God's mercy — each rests it on different grounds.

The first of these is based on the *greatness* of the suffering (ver. 1-8).

The second on the *patience* of the sufferer, as well as on the suffering (ver. 9-14).

The third on the fear lest, through his fate, wicked men should have an occasion of triumph (ver. 15-22).

[A Psalm of David. To bring to Remembrance.\*]

1 O JEHOVAH, in thine anger<sup>b</sup> rebuke me not,  
Neither in thy hot displeasure chasten me.

1. See note on vi. 1, where very nearly the same words occur. Most of what has been said on that Psalm is applicable here, and need not be repeated. Bakius interprets: "Corripe sane per legem, castiga per crucem, millies promerui, negare non possum; sed castiga, quaeso, me ex amore ut pater, non ex furore et fervore ut iudex; ne punias iustitiae rigore, sed misericordiae dulcore."

- 2 For thine arrows stick fast<sup>e</sup> in me,  
And thy hand presseth me sore.
- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation.  
There is no health in my bones because of my sin.
- 4 For mine iniquities have passed over my head ;  
Like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
- 5 My wounds stink, they are corrupt,  
Because of my foolishness.
- 6 I am bent, I am bowed down sore,  
All the day long have I gone mourning ;
- 7 For my loins are full of burning,  
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am benumbed and sore broken,  
I have roared by reason of the unrest of my heart.
- 9 Lord, before thee is all my desire,  
And my sighing is not hid from thee.
- 10 My heart pulseth quickly,<sup>d</sup> my strength hath failed me,  
And the light of mine eyes — even that<sup>e</sup> is gone from me.

2. There is here, and in what follows, as Calvin observes, a tacit appeal to God's promises. Why is it that the saint of God thus sets forth all his sufferings, but because he knows that his God will not lay on him a punishment heavier than he can bear? It is not therefore merely as a complaint, but as an appeal to the mercy of God, that he tells all his woe. There is a yet further appeal in the recognition of God's hand. "*Thine* arrows . . . *thy* hand." It is this conviction that God has inflicted the chastisement, that leads him to seek the remedy from the same source.

3. NO SOUNDNESS. Comp. Isa. i. 6. NO HEALTH; or "wholeness." Such is the proper and original meaning of the word שָׁלוֹם (*shālôm*), *integritas*, "peace" being the derived meaning, peace only there properly existing, where all is *complete* and entire, nothing wanting.

4. HAVE PASSED. A metaphor, as often, from waves passing over the head.

Comp. xviii. 16 [17]; lxix. 2 [3], 15 [16].

5. FOOLISHNESS. His sin, as seen now in its true light, showing itself to be folly, for all sin is self-destruction. "Hoc sensu," says Calvin, "David de stultitia sua loquitur: ac si diceret se fuisse mente alienatum, et instar pecudis abreptum, et circumactum bruto impetu, dum neglecto Deo suas cupiditates secutus est." This confession of his sin is, in fact, at the same time, a confession of the justice of his punishment.

6. I AM BENT; properly, as writhing with pain, as Isa. xxi. 3.

MOURNING. See on xxxv. 14.

8. I AM BENUMBED; lit. I have become deadly cold, cold as a corpse; possibly with reference to the burning inflammation in the previous verse, as marking the alternations in the fever-fit.

9. The one gleam of comfort and refreshment in his misery; the one bright ray which lights up the darkness; the one thought which sustains him, that



- 11 My friends and my companions stand aloof from my punishment,  
And my kinsmen have stood afar off.
- 12 They also lay snares, that seek after my soul,  
And they that strive to do me evil speak mischievous things,  
And meditate deceits all the day long.
- 13 But as for me, as a deaf man, I could not hear,  
And (I was) as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.
- 14 Yea, I became as a man that heareth not,  
And (as one) in whose mouth are no replies.
- 15 For in thee, O Jehovah, have I hoped ;  
Thou wilt answer (for me), O Lord my God.
- 16 For I said, — Lest they rejoice over me,  
(Lest)<sup>f</sup> when my foot is moved, they magnify themselves against me ;
- 17 For as for me, I am ready to halt,  
And my smart is ever before me ;

he may "unburden himself of all his griefs in the bosom of God." We have but to read the first fourteen verses without this verse, to see how much blacker the night of suffering grows.

11. Up to this point he has spoken of his suffering as arising from his own state both of body and mind. He describes now its aggravation from the conduct of others; first of friends who deserted him, and next of enemies who plotted against him. And this aggravation of his misery is again a fresh argument with God, — an argument borrowed, as Calvin reminds us, from the word of God, and one intended for our use. He remarks: "Si nos deficiunt omnia mundi praesidia, alii nos fraudant justis officiis, alii nihil quam caedem nostram spirant; veniat nobis in mentem, non frustra hoc inter precandum Deo proponi, cujus proprium est succurrere miseris, perfide desertos ac proditos in suam tutelam suscipere, compescere improbos," etc.

MY PUNISHMENT; lit. "my blow,"

a word always used of punishment as inflicted by God.

12. MISCHIEVOUS THINGS; lit. "a yawning gulf of destruction," as though they would swallow me up. See on v. 9, Critical Note.

14. NO REPLIES, not here "reproofs" or "rebukes," but answers, in self-vindication, to the calumnies of his enemies. Calvin sees two reasons for this comparison of himself to a dumb man: first, that he was *compelled* by the injustice of his enemies to be silent — they would not suffer him to speak; and next, his own patient submission to the will of God. But I think the last only is prominent here. It was not that David could not, but that he would not, answer. Comp. Rom. xii. 19. In this, he was the type of a greater sufferer in a more august agony (Isa. liii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 23).

16. I SAID; i.e. within myself.

LEST, with the usual ellipsis of some verb, such as "I fear," but again addressed as an argument to God; the argument being, that his honor is con-

- 18 For I must confess my iniquity,  
I must be sorry for my sin ;
- 19 And mine enemies are vigorous<sup>a</sup> (and) strong,  
And they are many that hate me without cause ;
- 20 And requiting evil for good,  
They withstand me for my following<sup>b</sup> that which is good.
- 21 Leave me not, O Jehovah ;  
My God, be not far from me.
- 22 Haste (thee) to help me,  
O Lord, my salvation.

cerned in upholding his servant, lest the wicked should triumph. Therefore, too, he leaves it to God to answer, lest by answering himself he should give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

18. FOR ; the conjunction recurs here for the fourth time in verses 15-18. But it is hardly used in so loose a manner as Hupfeld and others suppose. It seems in each case to supply a link in the train of thought. In verse 15 it gives the reason why David made no reply to his enemies, *for* God, he felt, would answer for him. In verse 16 it gives the reason why he would have God answer—*for* he feared that if he took

the matter into his own hand, his enemies would have occasion to triumph. In verse 17 the *for* gives a further reason why this was probable, viz. his own weakness ; and in verse 18, the reason for the weakness, with another *for*, is found in his sin which he has to confess, whilst, on the other hand (verse 19), his enemies are full of strength, and numerous as they are strong. This, I believe, is the connection between the different verses.

21, 22. With this conclusion of the Psalm compare the similar expressions, xxii. 11 [12], 19 [20] ; xxxv. 22 ; xl. 13 [14], etc.

<sup>a</sup> לְחֹזֶק, found also in the superscription of Psalm lxx., “to bring to remembrance,” i.e. either as a memorial of suffering and deliverance, or, “to bring me into remembrance *with God*.” So the Chald., Rashi, Gesen., Hengst. The last explains it of complaints and prayers, as opposed to praises and thanksgivings, with reference to 1 Chron. xvi. 4. There is perhaps an allusion to the אֲזַכְרָה (see xx. 4, and Isa. lxvi. 3), or offering of incense, the smoke of which went up for a memorial before God.

<sup>b</sup> קֶצֶף is wrath, as *an outburst of passion* ; חֶמֶד, as *a burning glow* ; זַעַם, as *a foaming up*.

<sup>c</sup> נָחַתוּ, “have sunk down, entered deep.” Niph. of the form נָחַת, which immediately follows in the Kal, unless, indeed, this is only a false punctuation for נָחַתוּ, used intransitively.

<sup>d</sup> סִתְחֻתָּהּ, Pealal, as descriptive of the rapid pulsations of the heart in a state of fever ; but according to Hupfeld the form is not intensive, but diminutive, the pulsations being *less* in proportion to their rapidity.

<sup>e</sup> גַּם הֵם . This is not a fresh nominative, but is in apposition with עֵינַי , as the pronoun sometimes is with a *casus obliquus*, and, therefore, a genitive = *et ipsorum*, “The light of my eyes, even of them, I say, is not with me.” Gesen. § 121, 3.

<sup>f</sup> On the construction of פָּן , as covering both the verbs in this verse, see note <sup>a</sup>, on xxviii. 1.

<sup>g</sup> הָיִים . For this Houbigant would read הָיָם , and he is followed by Hupfeld, Ewald, and others. No doubt this answers to שָׁקַר in the next clause, and is a common form of expression. But the other reading is at least as old as the LXX, οἱ δὲ ἐχθροί μου ζῶσι καὶ κεκραταίνονται ὑπὲρ ἐμέ.

<sup>h</sup> רָדַפִּי . The K'rî is רָדַפִּי , as xxvi. 2, צָרַפָּה instead of צְרוּפָה . (Comp. the future form, Isa. xviii. 4). But the K'thibh might stand here רָדַפִּי , as the last word but one has sometimes the pausal form, when the last word is a monosyllable (Deut. xxxii. 37), or has the tone on the penultimate (Josh. xiii. 9).

## PSALM XXXIX.

“THE most beautiful,” says Ewald, “of all elegies in the Psalter.” It is the sorrowful complaint of a heart, not yet subdued to a perfect resignation, but jealous with a godly jealousy, lest it should bring dishonor upon its God, and longing for light from heaven to scatter its doubts. The holy singer had long pent up his feelings; and though busy thoughts were stirring within him, he would not give them utterance. He could not bare his bosom to the rude gaze of an unsympathizing world. And he feared lest, while telling his perplexities, some word might drop from his lips which would give the wicked an occasion to speak evil against his God. (This feeling is one, the expression of which we have already had in the preceding Psalm). And when at last, unable to repress his strong emotion, he speaks, it is to God and not to man. It is as one who feels how hopeless the problem of life is, except as seen in the light of God. It is with the deep conviction of personal frailty (ver. 6) and sinfulness (ver. 9), as well as of the frailty and sinfulness of all men. It is with the touching sadness of one who cannot be comforted. And yet the weeping eye is raised to heaven, and amidst all his grief and perplexity, notwithstanding all that is so dark and cheerless in the world, pilgrim and stranger as he is, the Psalmist can still say, “My hope is in thee” (ver. 7).

The Psalm consists properly of two parts :

I. A preface descriptive of the circumstances under which it was composed (ver. 1-3).

II. The expression of the Psalmist's feelings as the time (ver. 4-13).

This latter part, however, may be again subdivided into three sections, the first two of which close with the refrain and the *Selah*.

(1) A prayer to be taught rightly concerning the vanity of life (ver. 4, 5).

(2) A confession of that vanity—a cleaving to God, and an acknowledgment that sin deserves chastisement (ver. 6-11).

(3) A further prayer that God would hear him, because he is but a stranger, and his days few upon earth (ver. 12, 13).

[For the Precentor. For Jeduthun.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm of David.]

- 1 I SAID, Let me keep my ways,  
That I sin not with my tongue :  
Let me keep a bridle on my mouth,  
While the wicked is yet before me.
- 2 I remained dumb in silence ;  
I held my peace, and had no comfort,<sup>b</sup>  
And my sorrow was stirred.
- 3 My heart was hot within me ;  
While I was musing a fire burned :  
(Then) spake I with my tongue :
- 4 Make me know, O Jehovah, mine end,  
And the measure of my days what it is,  
That I may know how frail<sup>c</sup> I am.

1. I SAID, i.e. I thought, I formed this resolution. (Comp. xxxviii. 16 [17].) And the resolution was not to sin with his tongue. He feared lest his complaint should be misinterpreted as murmuring against God. But the sadness of his heart prevails against his resolution ; the more the feeling was checked, the more hotly it burned (comp. Jer. xx. 9), till at last it could be restrained no longer.

4. Herder supposes that the words which the Psalmist "spake with his tongue" are not given, but that, in-

stead of this, he turns to God with the prayer to be taught resignation. Delitzsch takes the same view. But this I am persuaded is not the most natural interpretation. The words that he "spake with his tongue" are those which follow to the end of the Psalm. The introduction is merely the record of that inward struggle out of which the Psalm itself arose. And the words that he does speak are directed to God in prayer for teaching, not to man in complaints.

But in what relation does the prayer



5 Behold, thou hast made my days as hand-breadths,  
And my life-time is as nothing before thee :

Surely every man, at his best estate, is nothing but a  
breath. [Selah.]

6 Surely in a shadow doth a man walk to and fro ;  
Surely for a breath are they disquieted :

He heapeth up (treasures), and knoweth not who  
shall gather them.

7 And now what have I waited for, O Lord ?  
My hope is in thee.

which follows stand to the perplexity which gave birth to it ? Why does he ask, MAKE ME KNOW MINE END ? It is not (as Hengst. supposes) an expression of impatience, "I am weary of this suffering : tell me when my life shall end, and so my suffering end" ; nor is it an expostulation with God (as Kimchi and Calvin), as if he would say, "See how short my life is ; is such a life long enough for all thou layest upon me ?" Such interpretations are at variance with the tone of sad resignation which breathes through the Psalm. It is rather this : "Make me rightly to know and estimate the shortness and uncertainty of human life, that so, instead of suffering myself to be perplexed with all that I see around me, I may cast myself the more entirely upon Thee," as indeed follows : "And now, Lord, what wait I for ?" The prayer in xc. 12 is somewhat similar, though it stands there in a different connection.

5. LIFE-TIME. On this word see xvii. 14, note<sup>e</sup>.

AT HIS BEST ESTATE, lit. "standing fast," i.e. however firmly established he may be.

A BREATH. Such is the literal meaning of the word. In xc. 9, a different word is used ; see note there.

6. With this verse, as is evident both from the refrain at the end of the last, and the Selah, a new strophe or division of the Psalm begins. Hence, Delitzsch divides wrongly when he makes this verse close a strophe. Nothing is more

usual than the resumption, in a fresh strophe, of a sentiment which has occurred before.

IN A SHADOW, i.e. as a shadow, without any reality. The preposition is what is called the *Beth essentialis*, which serves to introduce the predicate. See on xxxv. note<sup>b</sup>, xxxvii. 20.

WALK TO AND FRO, or "come and go," *va e viene*, as Diodati, with an exact appreciation of the Hebrew, renders it.

ARE THEY DISQUITED ; lit. "do they make a noise, or commotion." All the fret and stir, all the eager clamor and rivalry of men, as they elbow and jostle one another to obtain wealth and rank, and the enjoyments of life, are but a breath. Comp. James iv. 13, 14, where, after describing the busy scene, the buyers and sellers thronging the marketplace, and full of the thought of their trade, and of their speculations for the year, he solemnly asks, "For what is your life ? For it is a vapor (*ἀτμός*) which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away."

7. AND NOW, turning away, as it were, with a sense of relief from the sad contemplation of man's fleeting, transitory life, to fix the eye of his heart on him who abideth ever. We seem almost to hear the deep sigh with which the words are uttered. It is remarkable that even here it is on God himself, not on a life to come, that his hope sustains itself. "Although not expressly assured of a future life of blessedness, his faith,

- 8 From all my transgressions deliver me ;  
 Make me not a reproach of the fool.
- 9 I was dumb, — I could not open my mouth ;  
 Because thou didst it.
- 10 Turn aside from me thy stroke,  
 I am (even) consumed by the blow of thine hand.
- 11 (When) with rebukes for iniquity thou hast chastened  
 a man,  
 Thou makest his beauty melt away like the moth.<sup>a</sup>  
 Surely every man (is but) a breath. [Selah.]

even in the midst of death, lays hold on Jehovah as the living one, and as the God of the living. It is just this which, as Hengstenberg also here observes, is so heroic in the Old Testament faith, that in the midst of the riddles of the present, and in view of a future, losing itself in a night of gloom, it casts itself absolutely and without hesitation into the arms of God." — *Delitzsch*.

Calvin, who says that the Psalm consists partly of true prayers, and partly of hasty complaints, observes that it is here that David begins truly to pray.

8. FROM ALL MY TRANSGRESSIONS. He now strikes at once at the root of all his sufferings and all his perplexities. "Pergit in contextu piae sanctaeque precationis. Neque enim jam rapitur doloris impetu, ut cum Deo expostulet, sed reum se coram Deo suppliciter statuens, ad misericordiam ejus confugit: quia dum se a sceleribus eripi postulat, Deo justitiae laudem adscribens, miseriae quam sustinet culpam in se suscipit: neque unius tantum peccati se accusat, sed fatetur multiplici reatu se esse obstrictum." — *Calvin*.

MAKE ME NOT A REPROACH — said, it would seem, with reference to the temptation which had assailed him before, to give utterance to his disquietude even in the presence of the ungodly. But the connection is difficult, and it may only mean, "Do not so chasten me that fools may rejoice at my suffering."

9. I WAS DUMB. This clearly refers to the resolve and conduct described in

ver. 1, 2. It does not introduce the expression of a fresh resolve, as many have supposed.

I COULD NOT OPEN; or simply as a subordinate clause to the preceding, "without opening my mouth." He thus reiterates before God how careful he had been to avoid giving offence by any hasty word; alleges the reason for this, because he felt that his suffering was God's doing; and urges it as a motive with God in the entreaty which follows. Kimchi explains this verse with reference to the preceding, thus: I could not complain of man, for it was God's doing; I could not complain of God, for it was because of my sin.

10. BLOW; lit. "attack"; the word only occurs here — parallel with *STROKE*, which precedes. For this last word, see on xxxviii. 11 [12]. The pronoun "I" expressed is emphatic, and implies a tacit contrast between his own weakness and the power of God, whose hand was laid upon him.

11. This verse contains a further reason why God should take away his stroke.

LIKE THE MOTH. This may either mean (1) that man's beauty is like the moth, frail and perishing; or (2) the action of God upon man may be compared to the silent, secret, yet sure, effect of the moth in fretting a garment, as in our Prayer-book version, where the words are paraphrased "like a moth fretting a garment." But the first explanation is preferable.

- 12 Hear my prayer, O Jehovah,  
 And give ear unto my cry ;  
 At my weeping be not silent :  
 For I am a stranger with thee,  
 A sojourner, as all my fathers (were).  
 13 Look away from me, that I may recover strength,  
 Before I go hence, and be no more.

12. The Psalm closes with a still more earnest appeal to God's pitying mercy, based still on that very transitoriness of life which is the burden of the whole.

A STRANGER, A SOJOURNER. LXX, *παρικός καὶ παρηνίδημος*, as 1 Pet. ii. 11, *ξένος καὶ παρηνίδημος*, Heb. xi. 13, borrowed from Gen. xxiii. 4. Comp. the confession of David (1 Chron. xxix. 15), "For we are strangers with thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers (were). As a shadow are our days upon the earth, and there is no hope (here)." A STRANGER (גֵּר), "one who is but a passing guest"; A SOJOURNER, "one who settles for a time in a country, but is not a native of it."

AS ALL MY FATHERS; as the patriarchs had been in the land which was theirs only by promise. He himself, he felt, and all men were, on the earth, what Abraham was in the land of promise; he could not call one foot of it his own. Comp. also Lev. xxv. 23.

13. The last verse is borrowed from Job vii. 19; x. 20, 21. See also Job vii. 8; ix. 27; xiv. 6.

LOOK AWAY; i.e. keep not thine eye fixed upon me in anger; it answers to "Turn aside thy stroke," in verse 10.

THAT I MAY RECOVER STRENGTH; properly applied to the countenance, "that I may become cheerful."

גִּירוֹן, — found also in the inscriptions to Psalms lxii. and lxxvii., — the name of one of David's three choir-masters, as we learn from 1 Chron. xvi. 41, 42; xxv. 1–6. See also 2 Chron. v. 12. In 2 Chron. xxxv. 15 he is called "the king's seer," and was probably the same person as Ethan, 1 Chron. xv. According to the K'thîbh, the form here is גִּירִיֹּן, as also lxxvii. 1; 1 Chron. xvi. 38; Neh. xi. 17, to be explained by the constant and ready interchange of גִּי and גִּי. The K'ri, however, is more in analogy with other forms, such as זְבוּלִין, רִשְׁרִין.

מְשִׁיב. This has been very differently explained. The Chald., Aq., and the older interpreters generally, as the E. V., "I was silent even from good," taking the "good" however in different senses, such as "the law," "the praise of God," or such "good words" as might have been a reply to his adversaries. This, however, is not defensible. מֶן, after the verb of silence, can only allow, as Hupfeld rightly maintains, of one of two interpretations, either, (1) "*far from good*," i.e. without comfort, joy, or the like, comp. Job xxviii. 4; or, (2) as the negative consequence of the silence (מְשִׁיב being an infin. for לֹא מְשִׁיב),

“so that it was not well with me,” or, “without its being well with me,” parallel with what follows, “and my sorrow was stirred.”

<sup>c</sup> מִהֲחָרַל. The LXX, τί ὑστερῶ, Vulg., *quid desit mihi*, i.e. “how much of my life yet remains”; Chald., “when I cease,” i.e. to be in the world. חָרַל is lit. “that which ceases, or has an end,” and so transitory, frail, etc. Hence it is not necessary to correct, with Hupfeld, מִהֲחָלַר אֲ, *quantilli sim aevi*, as lxxxix. 48. There can be no doubt that there is a confusion of the two words in Isa. xxxviii. 11, where for חָרַל we must read חָלַר.

<sup>d</sup> וְהָיָה, fut. apoc. Hiph. of מָסָה (Gesen. § 75, Rem. 151), following the *perfect conditional*. But see on lviii. 8 [9], Critical Note.

הַמְדוֹר is properly a part. pass. (like הַמְחַד), with suff., and means strictly “that which is lovely, precious,” etc., as Job xx. 20; Isa. xlv. 9; here “beauty, loveliness.”

## PSALM XL.

THIS Psalm consists of two parts. The first (ver. 1–10) tells the story of God’s mercies in a former time of trouble; the second (ver. 11–18) is a cry for the like help and deliverance, now that fresh calamities are come. The writer, looking back to the past, tells how he had been brought into the deepest abyss of misery; he had been like one falling into a pit, or sinking in a deep morass, where there was no resting-place for his feet; but God of his great mercy had heard him when he cried, had delivered him from his trouble, had set his feet on a rock, and established his goings (ver. 3); and not only had he done this, but he had also given him a heart and a tongue to praise him (ver. 3). Then follows the expression of his feelings at the time. Here, after speaking of the blessedness of trusting in Jehovah, and of the wonders of his goodness, not only to the singer himself, but to all Israel (comp. lxxiii. 1), he further declares what had been the great lesson of his affliction,—how he had learnt that there was a better sacrifice than that of bulls and goats, even the sacrifice of an obedient will; and how, moreover, he had found that this truth which God had opened his ears to receive (ver. 6) was in most perfect harmony with the truth taught in the written law (ver. 7); and lastly, how, constrained by a sense of gratitude, he had published to “the great congregation” the loving-kindness and truth of the Lord.



In the second division of the Psalm, he pleads the past, and his own conduct in the past, as a ground for renewed mercies being vouchsafed to him, now that he is in fresh trouble, bowed down by the burden of his sins (ver. 9), and cruelly pursued by his enemies (ver. 14). Thrice he prays earnestly for himself (ver. 11, 13, 17); the last time, faith having vanquished in the struggle, there mingles with the cry for help the touching expression of confidence in God: "But as for me, miserable and helpless though I be, the Lord thinketh upon me." With these personal petitions are joined others against the malice of his enemies (14, 15), and intercession on behalf of all those who, like himself, love and seek Jehovah.

This second part, or rather the portion of it from verse 13 to verse 17, appears again, in an independent form, as Psalm lxx. But it is, I think, almost certain, that the Psalm in its present form is the original, and the latter verses were subsequently detached and slightly altered, in order to form a distinct poem. In proof of this, it may be observed, (1) that the two parts of the Psalm are always found united in all ancient versions and mss.; (2) that the differences of language which occur in Psalm lxx. are more easily explicable, on the supposition that it was detached from Psalm xl., than on the opposite hypothesis; (3) that there is a play in the second half of the Psalm on words already occurring in the first half, which shows an original connection between them. (See more in the notes here, and on lxx.)

Whether David was the author of this Psalm is a question which we can hardly hope now to decide. There are expressions in it not unlike those which we find in Psalms unquestionably his; but we cannot pretend to point to any circumstances in his life to which it undoubtedly refers. Ewald thinks that the prominence given to the roll of the book in verse 7 is an indication that it was written about the time of Josiah's reformation, and shortly after the discovery of the Book of the Law in the Temple. This, however, is one of those external coincidences of which too much may easily be made.

With regard to the predictive character of the Psalm, and the reference of one portion of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews to Christ, something will be found on that subject in the notes on verse 6, as well as in chap. iii. of the General Introduction. The great principle of a *typical* predictiveness in all Jewish history is the most satisfactory principle of interpretation in this and in all similar cases.

The first division of the Psalm consists of ten, and the second of seven verses.

I. The first may again be subdivided into two strophes, consisting of

five verses each. Here, verses 1-5 declare what God had done; verses 6-10, what return the Psalmist had made. (1) In the former strophe, verses 1-3, speak of the divine aid as vouchsafed to the individual; verses 4, 5, as extended to all his people. (2) In the latter we have, first, the thanksgiving of *act*, verses 6-8; and then the thanksgiving of *word*, verses 9-10.

II. The second part has also its subdivisions, though not so clearly marked. We may either regard it as consisting of two strophes, the first of three verses (ver. 11-13); and the second of four (ver. 14-17); or we may distribute it into three parts, verses 11, 12; 13-15; 16, 17. According to the last division we have, first, the appeal to God based on the greatness of the Psalmist's personal sufferings; and next, as directed against the power of his enemies; and finally, the confident hope in God's care and love, which never fails those that seek him.

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

1 TRULY I had waited upon Jehovah,

And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry;

2 And he brought me up out of a pit of destruction,<sup>a</sup>

Out of a miry swamp,

And set my feet upon a rock,

(And) made my footsteps firm;

1, 2. He tells how Jehovah had rewarded his trust by answering his prayer, and how he had rescued him from imminent destruction.

1. TRULY I HAD WAITED; or "I did indeed wait," as implying there was such a thing as an opposite temper of mind, and that this had been carefully avoided. This use of the infinitive absolute with the finite verb may serve to assert a fact strongly, in opposition to some other fact implied or expressed; and not only to emphasize the idea contained in the verb itself. The latter usage *may* have been intended here; and if so, the *long-continued*, *patient* waiting will be the prominent notion. In the former case, the waiting as opposed to the not waiting; in the latter, the nature of the waiting itself, is described.

2. The deliverance. The metaphor of the pit may be used either with ref-

erence to a pitfall for wild beasts, as vii. 15 [16], or a dungeon, such as that into which Jeremiah was cast (Jer. xxxviii. 6), and which would often have a damp and miry bottom.

MIRY SWAMP; lit. "mire of mud," an almost pleonastic expression; comp. lxi. 2 [3]. The expressions are clearly metaphorical. This I mention, because some expositors have maintained that the Psalm was written by Jeremiah, and that the reference is to the literal pit, or dungeon, into which he was cast. If so, where, asks Maurer, was the rock on which his feet were placed?

MADE MY FOOTSTEPS FIRM; i.e. did not merely bring me into a place of safety, and there leave me, but provided for my future security.

3. A NEW SONG; i.e. one celebrating with all the power of a recent gratitude a new and signal act of deliverance.

3 And he put a new song in my mouth,

(Even) praise unto our God : —

Many shall see (it) and fear,

And shall put their trust in Jehovah : —

4 Blessed is the man who hath made Jehovah his trust,

And hath not turned to the proud,<sup>b</sup> and to such as go  
aside falsely.<sup>c</sup>

5 Thou hast greatly multiplied,<sup>d</sup> O Jehovah my God,

Thy wonders, and thy thoughts towards us ;

They cannot be set in order unto thee :

Would I declare them, and speak of them,

They are more than I can tell.

The old forms, the customary expressions, the well-known hymns, were not enough. See on xxxiii. 3. So Calvin : "*Novum ponit pro singulari et exquisito : sicuti genus liberationis non vulgare erat, sed aeterna memoria dignum.*" Ewald thinks that there follows, partly a reminiscence and partly the very words of this new song, as it had been sung at the time of the deliverance. The words "praise unto our God" are, he supposes, a reminiscence, the Psalm having probably begun, "Praise ye Jehovah." So too the words, "many shall see it and fear," etc., may have appeared in the song in the form of an exhortation : "see it and fear, and put your trust," etc. Finally, the words of verses 4, 5 are, according to him, words of the former song quoted in this. I was at one time disposed myself to regard the latter part of verse 3, "Many shall see . . . trust in Jehovah," as parenthetical, and verse 4-10 as the very words of the new song. But such a supposition is perhaps unnecessary. The train of thought is sufficiently clear without having recourse to it.

4. HIS TRUST ; i.e. object of trust, as lxxv. 5 [6] ; Isa. xx. 5, and elsewhere. This obviously is a continuation of the last clause of the preceding verse : "Many shall trust in Jehovah, and blessed are they who do so." The next verse again gives the reason for this trust — the mani-

fold and marvellous deliverances which God had ever vouchsafed to Israel.

HATH NOT TURNED ; a word used especially of apostasy from the true God to idols, as Lev. xix. 4 ; Dent. xxix. 18 [17] ; Hos. iii. 1, and often.

5. THOU HAST GREATLY MULTIPLIED, etc. ; lit. "many hast thou made thy wonders," etc. Three different renderings of the former part of this verse are possible.

(1) "Thou hast multiplied thy wonders and thy thoughts to usward : there is none that can be compared unto thee — would I declare," etc. (2) "Thou hast multiplied," etc. (as before) . . . "It is not possible to set them in order unto thee," etc. (3) "Thou hast multiplied thy wonders ; and thy thoughts towards us, it is not possible to set in order," etc. (See more in the Critical Note.) Similarly in the latter part of the verse, there is a choice as to the way in which we connect the clause, "Would I declare them," etc., with what goes before, or with what follows : "They cannot be set in order, would I declare them," or "Would I declare . . . they are more," etc.

6. He proceeds now to declare the great truth which God had taught him, and which it would seem he had learned in his affliction, that God desires the sacrifice of the will rather than the sacrifice of slain beasts.

We may, perhaps, paraphrase verses

6 In sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight, —  
 Mine ears hast thou opened, —  
 Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.

5-8 as follows: My heart is full to overflowing with the thought of thy goodness. How can I express, how can I acknowledge it? Once I should have thought sacrifices and offerings a proper and sufficient acknowledgment. Now I feel how inadequate these are; for thou hast taught me the truth; my deaf, unwilling ears didst thou open, that I might understand that a willing heart was the best offering I could render. Then, being thus taught of thee, I said, Lo I come, presenting myself before thee, not with a dead and formal service, but with myself as a living sacrifice. The truth here inculcated is stated fully in Ps. l., and is often insisted on by the prophets. Comp. 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. li. 16 [18]; lxix. 30, 31 [31, 32]; Isa. i. 11; Jer. vii. 21, etc.; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 6-8.

SACRIFICE, properly of slain beasts. OFFERING; i.e. the bloodless offering of fine flour, etc. BURNT-OFFERING, the object of which was to obtain the divine favor; whereas that of the SIN-OFFERING was to make propitiation. But the four are here mentioned only with a view to express in the largest way *all manner of sacrifices*.

MINE EARS HAST THOU OPENED; lit. "Ears hast thou dug (or pierced) for me"; "given me open ears." This is a parenthetical clause, which has been variously explained; (1) Aq., ὥτια δὲ ἔσκαψάς μοι; Symm., ὥτια δὲ κατεσκέυασάς μοι; Theod. and Gr. 5 and 6, ὥτια κατηρύσω μοι; Jerome, *aures fodisti mihi*; Syr., "ears hast thou pierced for me"; Vulg., *aures perfecisti mihi*. The same sense was probably designed by these different interpretations, Aquila and Jerome giving the literal rendering, whilst the others exhibit the meaning = "Thou hast so constructed my ears that they have an open passage through which thy instructions can reach me"; or as Rud. explains, "Meatus aurium mearum aperuisti mihi, et aptasti ut pateant tibi." (Comp. Cic. *Tusc. Quaest.* i. 20, "...

viae quasi sunt . . . ad aures . . . a sede animae perforatae. Foramina illa quae patent ad animum a corpore, callidissimo artificio natura fabricata est.") Hence, "Thou hast dug (or constructed) ears for me," would be equivalent to saying, "Thou hast given me ears to hear"; that which is literally true of the structure of the bodily ear being here transferred in a figure to the *spiritual* ear, as is evident from the context. (So in the parallel phrases "eyes to see," "a heart to understand," etc. Isa. vi. 9, 10; Deut. xxix. 4 [3], etc.)

(2) Others again take the expression here, "to dig the ears," as = "to pierce the ear," in the same sense as the phrases "to open the ear," Isa. xlviii. 8; 1. 4, 5; "to uncover the ear," 1 Sam. ix. 15; xx. 2, 12, 13; Job xxxiii. 16, and many other passages, as implying a divine communication, a supernatural impartation of knowledge. Then, "ears hast thou pierced for me" would mean, "This truth hast thou revealed to me"; which comes to very much the same thing as the last, "This hast thou enabled me to receive and understand." It is not a sufficient objection to these interpretations that the verb כרה means only "to dig," not "to pierce." See on xxii., note. d

(3) The Rabbinical commentators, for the most part, interpret the phrase to mean, "Thou hast made me obedient," the connection between hearing and obedience being common enough, with reference to 1 Sam. xv. 22, "to obey (lit. hear) is better than sacrifice," and Jer. vii. 22.

(4) There is certainly no allusion to the custom of nailing the ear of the slave to the door-post, as a symbol of perpetual servitude and obedience (Ex. xxi. 6). For this, the technical word רצע is used; only *one* ear was thus pierced; and the allusion would be far-fetched and quite out of place here, — *coacta argutia*, as Calvin calls it.

(5) The LXX have the singular



7 Then said I, "Lo, I come ; —

In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me, —

reading *σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι*, "a body hast thou prepared me." [All the other Greek versions (and even some mss. of the LXX) have *ῥήματα*, and the Vulg., which is translated from the LXX, *aures*.] This reading, which appears also in Heb. x. 5, 7, where this passage is quoted, is commonly supposed to have arisen from a corruption of *ΩΤΙΑ* into *ΩΜΑ*; the C being repeated from the previous *ΗΘΕΛΗCΑC* and the *ΤΙ* being changed into *Μ*. But it is more probable that the LXX intended to give a paraphrase rather than a literal rendering of the passage. An old scholion supposes the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews to have made the change himself purposely (*πρὸς οἰκείον σκόπον τούτῳ χρησάμενος*). And Calvin almost intimates that this might have been the case: "*Corporis vocem ad suum propositum deflexit.*" Grotius suggests that the word *σῶμα* may even have found its way from the Epistle into the mss. of the Alexandrine version, the like to which has certainly happened in other instances (see on xiv. 3). Bengel says, that the writer of the Epistle merely interprets the Psalmist as putting the part, "the ears," for the whole, "the body."

It should be noted, however, that this change in a word, considerable as undoubtedly it is, is not such as very materially to affect the argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the purpose of the writer is not so much to insist on the fact that our Lord's sacrifice was the sacrifice of a human body — that was already implied in his "coming into the world," his incarnation, — but that it was the offering of an obedient will. It should also further be observed, that the words are not quoted as a prophecy which was fulfilled in Christ, but the writer finds words which once expressed the devotion of a true Israelite to be far more strikingly expressive, indeed, in their highest sense, only truly expressive, of the perfect obedience of the Son of God. All true words of God's saints of

old, all high and holy aspirations, however true and excellent in their mouths, went far beyond themselves, and found their perfect consummation only in him who was the Perfect Man. (This view of these and like Messianic passages will be found enlarged upon, and fully justified, in the General Introduction.)

7. *Lo, I come*; i.e. to appear before thee; a phrase used to indicate the coming of an inferior into the presence of a superior, or of a slave before his master (Num. xxii. 38; 2 Sam. xix. 21); — as in the similar expression "behold, here I am," — generally expressive of willingness.

**IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK.** Another parenthetical clause, corresponding to the former, "Mine ears hast thou opened," that which thou hast taught me is that which is contained in thy law; I find there the same truth which thy Spirit hath already written on my heart. The **BOOK** is the book of the law of Moses. The **ROLL** shows that it was written upon parchment; this is a word common enough in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

**IT IS PRESCRIBED TO ME**, or laid upon me as a duty, exactly in the same sense as the words occur 2 Kings xxii. 13, where, on the discovery of the book of the law, it is said, "Great is the wrath of Jehovah — because our fathers hearkened not to the words of this book, to do according to all which is prescribed to us"; where our version has, "which is written concerning us," just as in this passage it has, "it is written of me," in this following the interpretation of the LXX, *περὶ ἐμοῦ*; an interpretation which is adopted in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Ewald, Delitzsch, and others, strangely enough render, "Lo, I come *with* the roll of the book," etc., as if the Psalmist actually took the roll of the Pentateuch (or of Deuteronomy, a copy of which the king in particular was commanded to have, Deut. xvii. 14–20) with him into the Temple. What the propriety or significance of such an act could be, I am

- 8 To do thy pleasure, O my God, I delight,  
Yea thy law is in my inmost heart."
- 9 I have published righteousness in (the) great congregation;  
Lo, my lips I would not refrain,  
O Jehovah, THOU knowest.
- 10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart.  
Thy faithfulness and thy salvation have I uttered,  
I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth  
From (the) great congregation.
- 11 Thou, O Jehovah, wilt not refrain thy tender compassions  
from me;  
Let thy loving-kindness and thy truth always defend me.
- 12 For evils have come about me without number;  
My iniquities have taken hold upon me that I cannot see:  
They are more than the hairs of my head,  
And my heart hath failed me.

at a loss to imagine. They then explain the prep. לְ differently. Ewald, "für mich," "for me"; Delitzsch, "über mich," "concerning me," i.e. as prescribing to me my duties as a king; DeWette, "Lo, I come with the roll of the book written upon me," i.e. upon my heart, referring to Jer. xxxi. 33; Prov. iii. 3. But first it seems very doubtful if לְ, "upon me," could stand thus nakedly for "upon my heart" (xlii. 4 [5] is not strictly parallel, as "my soul" follows); secondly, though the *law* might be said to be written on his heart, to say that the *roll* of the book was written upon his heart, would be a very different and a very harsh expression.

8. TO DO THY PLEASURE (or will). These words would seem naturally to depend on the foregoing, "Lo, I come," and so they are twice cited in Heb. x. 7, 9. Instead of that, however, a new verb is supplied, "I delight."

IN MY INMOST HEART (lit. "in the midst of my bowels," as the seat of the affections), written there on its "fleshy tables," and not merely in the book. Comp. xxxvii. 31; Deut. vi. 6, and see

the prophetic promises that so it should be with the whole nation (Jer. xxxi. 33; Isa. li. 7).

9. But not obedience only, but thanksgiving also shall form a part of his grateful acknowledgment of God's goodness; he will both do the will and speak the praises of Jehovah. This last, too, is better than sacrifice, (1. 14, 15, 23.)

On the enumeration of the various attributes of God, see above, xxxiv. 5-7.

9, 10. I HAVE PUBLISHED . . . I WOULD NOT REFRAIN . . . I HAVE NOT HID . . . I HAVE UTTERED . . . I HAVE NOT CONCEALED: words are heaped upon words to express the eager forwardness of a heart burning to show forth its gratitude. No elaborate description could so well have given us the likeness of one whose "life was a thanksgiving."

11. The Psalmist turns to earnest entreaty. Apparently, therefore, he has recalled a former deliverance, in order to comfort himself therewith in his present sorrow, and pleads his conduct in the past as a ground for fresh mercies. THOU WILT NOT REFRAIN, with evident reference to the I WOULD NOT REFRAIN, of

- 13 Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me ;  
     O Jehovah, to help me, make haste !
- 14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together  
     That seek after my life to destroy it !  
     Let them be turned backward, and put to shame,  
     That wish me evil !
- 15 Let them be struck dumb as a reward of their shame,  
     That say to me, Aha, Aha !
- 16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee !  
     Let such as love thy salvation say always,  
     “ Jehovah be magnified.”
- 17 And as for me, — afflicted and poor, the Lord thinketh  
     upon me.  
     Thou art my help and my deliverer :  
     O my God, make no long tarrying.

verse 9. Again, **THY LOVING-KINDNESS AND THY TRUTH**, with like reference to the preceding verse, “As I have not concealed them from others, so let them ever defend me.”

12. **MY INIQUITIES.** This verse is quite decisive as to the question which has been raised respecting the Messianic interpretation of the Psalm. It is quite impossible to refer such words as these to Christ ; and when expositors choose to say that “my iniquities” mean “the iniquities laid upon me,” they are doing violence, most unjustifiably, to the plain words of the text. Such interpreters can hardly find fault with Romanists for adding to the word of God.

13. From this verse to the end appears in a separate form as Ps. lxx., where consult the notes for the variations, etc.

Hupfeld maintains that Ps. lxx. is the original which has been appended here ; but then, in order to support this hypothesis, he is obliged to make Ps. xl. end with verse 11, feeling, no doubt, that with verse 12 the conclusion would be lame and imperfect. But it is, on the face of it, improbable that Ps. lxx. should have been joined on here by means of an intercalated verse. It is more likely that the latter part of this Psalm was detached and altered by a later writer, who felt, perhaps, that he could not so well use the former part in his own case.

**BE PLEASED** (omitted in Ps. lxx.), here used apparently with reference to “thy pleasure,” verse 8.

The whole of the conclusion of this Psalm reminds us of the conclusion of Ps. xxxv.

מְבוֹר שָׁאוֹן. LXX, ἐκ λάκκου ταραπωρίας. Others, “pit of roaring (waves).” And שָׁאוֹן no doubt generally occurs in this sense (1) of the noise of waters, as lxv. 7, [8] ; Isa. xvii. 12, 13, and then of the noise of multitudes ; but in Jer. xlvi. 17, it can only mean “destruction” (abstr. for concr.) This must likewise be the meaning here, for waters do not rage in a pit or cistern. Hence it is allied to other words from

the same root as שָׁחַת, *interitus*, Lam. iii. 47, and שְׁחָיָה, *ruinae*, Isa. xxiv. 12.

<sup>b</sup> רָהֳבִים. The plur. only occurs here. Most take the word as an adjective from a sing. רָהֵב, which does not exist, and this agrees with the following שְׁטִי כָזֹב. The Targ., סוּרְבִנְיָא; the LXX, εἰς ματαιότητας, and Jerome also renders it as a noun, *superbiae*, plur. for sing., as is common with abstr. nouns. The sing. רָהֵב is used as a name of Egypt, to denote its *noisy*, *boastful* reliance upon its own strength, a reliance, therefore, which could only be shamefully disappointed.

<sup>c</sup> שְׁטִי, another ἀπ. λεγ. part. plur. constr. of a form שוּט not in use instead of שָׁטָה. Most take the following כָּזֹב as the object to which this deflection is made, “who incline to lies” (like יוֹרְדֵי בֹר, “who go down to the pit”), i.e. who have recourse to some false and deceitful object of help. But as Hupfeld justly remarks, יָרַד, like בּוֹא, עָלָה, etc., always takes the accusat. of direction after it, and שְׁטִים does not mean merely “those who incline themselves,” but “those who turn aside,” i.e. apostates. Hence he takes כָּזֹב as a qualifying word, explaining the *nature* of the apostasy, “lying apostates,” like בִּגְדֵי אֶנָּה, in lix. 6. LXX, *μανίας ψευδεῖς*; Vulg., *insanias falsas*; Jerome, *pompas mendacii*.

<sup>d</sup> The connection of the different clauses of this verse is somewhat doubtful. Symm., πάμπολλα ἐποίησας . . . τεράστιά σου καὶ τοὺς διαλογισμούς σου τοὺς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν; Jerome, *Multa fecisti . . . mirabilia tua et cogitationes tuas pro nobis*. The LXX, on the other hand, connect the last words with what follows: καὶ τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς σου οὐκ ἔστι τις ὁμοιωθήσεται σοί. Much depends on how we render the words, אֵין אֵלֶיךָ יָרֵךְ. (1) These may be rendered, “there is none (lit. nothing) that can be put in comparison of thee.” עָרַךְ with ל, as lxxxix. 7. Comp. Isa. xl. 18. So the LXX and Syr. They will then stand in a parenthesis, and we must join “Thy marvellous works and thy thoughts” (i.e. purposes whence the works spring), as objects alike of the verb עָשִׂיתָ. But (2) עָרַךְ may also mean “to set forth” (see note on v. 3 [4]). “There is no laying forth of them unto thee,” i.e. as follows in the parallelism, they are beyond enumeration. So the Chald., and so Symm., οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκθέσθαι ἐπὶ σοῦ, and Jerome, *non invenio ordinem coram te*. Similarly Kimchi, Calvin, Rosen., Stier, etc. And again, these words may either stand in a parenthesis, or, following the construction (not the sense) of the LXX, be joined with what follows, “And thy thoughts which are to uswards, there is no setting forth unto thee.”



## PSALM XLI.

THIS Psalm seems to have been written in a season of recovery from sickness, and under a deep sense of the hypocrisy and ingratitude of false friends, who came to the Psalmist pretending to condole with him in his sickness, whilst in reality they hated him in their hearts and wished for his death. In this respect the Psalm has some resemblance to Psalm xxxviii., except that there the sufferer is deserted by his friends, and has to complain of their coldness rather than of their treachery.

The Psalm opens with a eulogy pronounced on those who know how to feel for and show compassion to the miserable and the suffering. This is evidently designed in order to condemn more forcibly, by way of contrast, the opposite line of conduct which is the subject of complaint. The Psalmist's own experience of the baseness and hollowness of the men who surrounded him made him only appreciate more sensibly the great value of faithful, sympathizing friends in a season of affliction. Ewald throws the whole of what follows into the past. He supposes the sacred poet to be recalling his own feelings, the words of his enemies, and his prayer on that occasion; and that in his suffering he had learned a great truth, viz. that the merciful should obtain mercy, and the unsympathizing and the hard-hearted meet with the destruction they deserve. But, as Hupfeld observes, the Psalm only pronounces a blessing on the compassionate; it says nothing of the fate of the unfeeling; the sentiment expressed can hardly be called a great truth; and it is forced and unnatural to suppose that the whole passage (verses 4-11), is a narrative of some long past event. The danger is one, as is evident from verse 10, which is not yet past. The period is one of convalescence, but of not yet established health. Compare verses 3, 5, 6, 8, 10.

The Psalm consists of three parts:

I. A blessing on those who with watchful love and compassion are ever ready to succor the needy and the distressed. Such men shall themselves experience the favor and loving-kindness of Jehovah when they are laid on a bed of sickness (ver. 1-3).

II. The Psalmist himself had found no sympathy. On the contrary, although (as I think is implied in the former part of the Psalm) he had ever been ready to sympathize with others, he found, now that he was himself in pain and suffering, the utter hollowness of those who in brighter hours had called themselves his friends. (And one is reminded

of the complaint of Job, chaps. xxix., xxx.) Even the most trusted counsellor, the most honored guest, had treacherously turned against him (ver. 4-9).

III. A prayer that, being restored to health, of God's mercy, he may be permitted to chastise his enemies ; and an expression of his confidence that God will not suffer his enemies to triumph, but will, as in times past, so now also, deliver him (ver. 10-12).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

1 BLESSED is he that considereth <sup>a</sup> the miserable :

In the day of evil Jehovah will deliver him.

2 Jehovah will keep him, and save him alive ;

He shall be blessed <sup>b</sup> in the land :

And give thou not him over to the will of his enemies !

3 Jehovah will support him on the couch of languishing :

All his bed hast thou changed in his sickness.

1-3. It is not easy to decide whether the verbs here should be taken as simple *futures* or *presents*, or whether they should be rendered as *optatives*. The last clause of verse 2, "and give thou not," etc. [where observe the negat. לֹא], favors the latter construction. This is also supported by the LXX, who, though they give the future in verse 1, *βύσεται*, have rendered all the verbs in verse 2 and the first member of verse 3 in the optative. On the other hand, it may be said that the perfect in the latter clause of verse 3, "Thou hast changed," requires the preceding verbs to be either *presents* or *futures* : and further, in other instances where a Psalm begins with בֵּשָׁר, "blessed," etc., there follows a description of the blessedness itself, an enumeration of the particulars in which that blessedness consists. Comp. the opening of Psalms i., xxxii., cxii., cxix., cxxviii.

1. THE MISERABLE, or "the suffering"; the word is one of wide meaning, and is used of the poor (as in Ex. xxx. 15), of the lean and weak in body (as Gen. xli. 19), of the sick in mind (as 2 Sam. xiii. 4).

2. IN THE LAND. On this Calvin remarks: "It might, indeed, appear absurd,

that he promises himself a happy life in the world, for our condition were hard indeed if a better lot did not await us elsewhere ; but because many had despaired of his recovery, he expressly says that he shall still survive, and that not without manifest tokens of God's grace : — words which by no means exclude the hope of a better life." The expression is, of course, due to that prominence given to temporal reward which was characteristic of the Old Testament.

3. HIS BED. The word above rendered "couch" means more strictly the bed itself, whereas this denotes rather the keeping the bed in sickness.

HAST THOU CHANGED. Many understand this of the refreshment and ease given to the sufferer by the smoothing of the pillow, etc. ; and hence the E.V., "Thou wilt *make* all his bed," etc. But the meaning rather is : "it is no longer a sick bed, for thou hast healed him of his disease." The past tense expresses here a common experience, not a single circumstance, as J. H. Michaelis rightly explains, "*Ut vertisti, ita et in posterum vertes melius.*"

4-9. The hypocrisy of his pretended friends described. Their conduct is pre-

- 4 As for me—I said: “Jehovah, be gracious unto me;  
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.”
- 5 Mine enemies say evil of me:  
“When will he die and his name have perished”?
- 6 And if he come to see (me) he speaketh vanity,  
His heart gathereth iniquity to itself;  
(When) he goeth abroad, he speaketh (it).
- 7 Together against me do all that hate me whisper;  
Against me do they devise evil for me:
- 8 “Some shocking thing (they say) is poured out<sup>c</sup> upon him,  
And (now) that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.”
- 9 Yea mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted,  
Who did eat of my bread,  
Hath lifted up his heel against me.

cisely the opposite of that which he has just before commended. They come to visit him, indeed, but not from motives of compassion, but with the secret hope that they may see him perish.

4. AS FOR ME . . . I SAID. The pronoun is emphatic, and marks both the transition from the previous eulogy of the compassionate man to the poet's personal feelings and desires, and also the opposition to the “enemies” in the next verse.

FOR I HAVE SINNED; i.e. It is my sin which has brought this suffering on me; but observe the prayer is, “Pardon my sin,” not “take away my suffering.” These words absolutely forbid an application of the whole Psalm to Christ.

5. HAVE PERISHED. Future perfect, which has been observed by Diodati (though generally overlooked): “E quando sarà perito il suo nome?”

6. IF HE COME. Singular, not impersonal, but because the Psalmist has in mind some individual whose hostility was peculiarly active. Here again Diodati shows his accuracy. “E se *alcun di loro* viene,” etc. “To see” = “to visit in sickness,” as 2 Sam. xiii. 5; 2 Kings viii. 29. Symm., ἐπισκοπήσαι, or ἐπισκέψασθαι. Three things are mentioned of them—a lying mouth, an evil heart, a love of slander.

8. SOME SHOCKING THING; lit. “thing of Belial,” which may mean either physical or moral evil. See xviii. 4 [5], note<sup>b</sup>. But the latter signification is the more common. Here the same form of expression occurs as in ci. 3; cf. Deut. xv. 9, in both of which passages *moral* evil is meant. Perhaps, however, “a thing of Belial” is = a punishment which comes for evil-doing. So Rashi.

9. WHO DID EAT OF MY BREAD. The Oriental feeling as to the sacredness of hospitality would stamp such conduct with peculiar blackness. If David wrote the Psalm, the ingratitude was the worse, because of the *honor* conferred on one who was admitted to the king's table. (2 Sam. ix. 10 ff.; 1 Kings xviii. 19.)

Part of this verse is quoted by our Lord in John xiii. 18 as applicable to the treacherous conduct of Judas, but with the significant omission of the words “mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted”; for our Lord knew what was in Judas from the beginning, and therefore did not trust him. Nothing can be more decisive both as to the way in which quotations were made, and also as to the proper interpretation of the apparently strong phrase, ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ, with which the quotation is introduced. First, it is plain that *particular expressions* in a Psalm may be ap-

- 10 But thou, O Jehovah, be gracious unto me,  
 And raise me up, that I may requite them :  
 11 By this I know that thou hast delight in me,  
 That mine enemy doth not shout over me.  
 12 And as for me, — in mine integrity thou hast upheld me,  
 And settest me before thy face forever.  
 13 Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,  
 From everlasting and to everlasting.  
 Amen, and Amen !

plicable to events which befel our Lord, whilst the whole Psalm is not in like manner applicable. And next it is evident that "the scripture is fulfilled" not merely when a prediction receives its accomplishment, but when words descriptive of certain circumstances in the life of the Old Testament saints find a still fuller and truer realization — one not foreseen by the Psalmist, yet one no less designed of God — in the circumstances of our Lord's earthly life. This will be peculiarly the case here if Ahithophel be meant; for as David was in much of his life a type of Christ, so the treachery of his trusted counsellor would be a foreshadowing of the treachery of Judas.

The rendering in John xiii. *ὁ τρώγων μετ' ἐμοῦ τὸν ἄρτον, ἐπῆρεν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τὴν πτέρναν αὐτοῦ*, is independent of the LXX, who have here more literally, *ἐμεγάλυνεν ἐπ' ἐμὲ περὶ νισμόν*. The Hebrew phrase is "hath made great his heel," which may either mean "he has lifted it on high, so as to trample on the object of attack," or "has given a hard violent blow with it."

#### 10. THAT I MAY REQUITE THEM.

Such a wish cannot be reconciled with our better Christian conscience. We find a purer and nobler tone of feeling in vii. 4 [5]; and Saadia would here supply, "good instead of evil," which however, is plainly not the meaning of the Psalmist. Calov's attempt to turn the edge of the words is worse: "Hinc constat, non Davidem, qui ipsi etiam Simeï condonavit, sed Christum, cujus est vindicta, hæc loqui." The true explanation of such expressions is, I believe, that given in a note on xxxv. Delitzsch, however, defends the wish here by saying that such a wish was justifiable in David as a lawful king who had been dethroned by rebellious subjects, and one which, by the help of God, he actually accomplished when he crushed the rebellion of Absalom.

13. This last verse is no part of the original Psalm, but is merely a later doxology, appended here when the Psalms were collected, in order to mark the conclusion of the first book. Similar doxologies occur at the end of the three following books.

<sup>a</sup> *השכיל* may either mean "to consider," "regard," i.e. look with an eye of compassion upon; comp. Neh. viii. 13, and with *שָׁלַח*, Prov. xvi. 20, with *ל*, Prov. xxi. 11, 12; or it may mean "to deal wisely," i.e. with the true wisdom of righteousness; cf. xiv. 2, where the wise man = the man who loves God. The LXX give the first of these meanings, *ὁ συνῶν ἐπὶ πτωχόν*; a scholiast, the last, *ὁ ἐννοῶν ἃ προσήκει περὶ τῶν πενήτων* (Versions and Commentaries are divided between these



two meanings); Vulg. *qui. intelligit super egenum et pauperem*; Luther, "der sich des Dürftigen annimmt"; Diodati, "che si porta saviamente inverso 'l povero e misero"; Mendels., "der für den Armen sorgt"; Hupfeld, "der achtsam (fromm) ist gegen den Schwachen (Bedrängten)."

<sup>b</sup> יֵאָשֵׁר, to be preferred to the K'ri יֵאָשֵׁר, which seems to have arisen from an attempt to supply the conj. Either (1), Pual of אָשֵׁר, "to pronounce happy" (Symm., μακαριστὸς ἔσται), "he shall be pronounced happy," or simply as echoing אָשֵׁר, ver. 2, "shall be happy," as in Prov. iii. 18, the only other place where the word occurs; or (2), from אָשֵׁר, "to lead in the right way"; so J. H. Michaelis, "feliciter in via salutis dirigetur." אֵל ה', a sudden transition from the description of the good man's lot to a prayer on his behalf. See note on xxxvi. 5. On נָפֶשׁ in this sense, see xxvii. 12.

<sup>c</sup> יִצּוֹק. Part. Pual fr. יָצַק, occurring also 1 Kings vii. 24, 30; Job xli. 15, 16. Perhaps the same figure as in Jer. xlii. 18. "Is poured out," i.e. so as to cover him and penetrate his whole body, like metal poured into a mould, which fills and adheres to every part. E. V. "cleaveth fast unto him," as if from root יָצַק.



THE PSALMS.



BOOK II.

PSALMS XLII.—LXXII.

THE second book of the Psalms differs from the first by one distinguishing characteristic, — its use of the Divine Name. In the first, God is spoken of and addressed as Jehovah ; in the second, as Elohim, the latter name being that which, in our version, is rendered “ God.” According to the computation given by Delitzsch, Jehovah occurs two hundred and seventy-two times in the first book, and Elohim but fifteen times ; whereas, in the second, Elohim occurs one hundred and sixty-four times, and Jehovah only thirty times. There is also another observable difference between the two books. In the first, all those Psalms which have any inscription at all, are expressly assigned to David as their author ; whereas, in the second, we find a whole series attributed to some of the Levitical singers. These inscriptions will be found noticed in their place. With regard to the meaning of the Divine Names, and their peculiar and characteristic occurrence ; it may suffice to refer to the articles JEHOVAH, GENESIS, and PENTATEUCH, in Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*.



## PSALM XLII.

THIS Psalm, though its date and authorship are uncertain, leaves us in no doubt as to the locality in which it was written. The sacred poet was in the land beyond the Jordan, near the mountain ridges of Hermon (ver. 6), in that land which was “*emphatically the land of exile — the refuge of exiles.*” Many expositors are of opinion that the Psalm was written by David on the occasion of his flight from his son Absalom, when, as we read 2 Sam. xvii. 24, etc., having crossed the fords of the Jordan near Jericho, he ascended the eastern height and took refuge at Mahanaim. It was at this spot, consecrated in patriarchal times by the vision of the hosts of God to Jacob, — this “*sanctuary of the trans-Jordanic region,*” — that the exiled monarch stationed himself, whilst the people that were with him spread themselves in the neighboring wilderness. The words of the Psalm are supposed to describe his sense of the greatness of his loss as debarred from all access to the sanctuary of God in Zion. But there are expressions in it which are clearly not applicable to David’s circumstances at the time. David was not amongst enemies who would mock him for his trust in Jehovah (xlii. 3, 10); on the contrary, he was surrounded by friends who were full of devotedness to his person, and who possessed the same religious faith with himself (2 Sam. xvii. 27–29). David could hardly say at such a time, “*I go mourning all the day because of the oppression of the enemy*” (xlii. 9; xliii. 2), however bitterly he might feel the unnatural conduct of his son and the alienation of his subjects. Hence Paulus, who has been followed by De Wette, Maurer, and others, conjectured that the Psalm is the lamentation of a priest, who, either in the time of Jeroboam was shut out from all access to the Temple, or who was among those who were carried away by the Chaldeans after the capture of Jerusalem, and who from these hills looked back on Western Palestine — his “*last sigh*” before it vanished for ever from his sight. Vaibinger supposes it to have been written by one of the Levites who was banished by Athaliah. Ewald thinks that the words may have been those of King Jehoiakim himself, when in the hand of his captors, who perhaps halted somewhere in this neighborhood for a

night, on their return to Assyria. But the general tone of the Psalm is rather that of one looking for *speedy* restoration to his native land, than of one carried away into enduring captivity in Babylon.

"From these heights [beyond Jordan]," says Stanley, "Abner in his flight from the Philistines, and David in his flight from Absalom, and the Israelites on their way to Babylon, and the Christian Jews of Pella, caught the last glimpse of their familiar mountains. There is one plaintive strain which sums up all these feelings — the forty-second Psalm. Its date and authorship are uncertain; but the place is, beyond doubt, the trans-Jordanic hills, which always behold, as they are always beheld from, Western Palestine. As before the eyes of the exile the 'gazelle' of the forests of Gilead panted after the fresh streams of water which there descend to the Jordan, so his soul panted after God, from whose outward presence he was shut out. The river with its winding rapids, 'deep calling to deep,' lay between him and his home. All that he could now do was to remember the past, as he stood 'in the land of Jordan,' as he saw the peaks of 'Hermon,' as he found himself on the eastern heights of Mizar, which reminded him of his banishment and solitude. As we began, so we end this brief account of the Peraen hills. They are the 'Pisgah' of the earlier history; to the later history they occupy the pathetic relation that has been immortalized in the name of the long ridge from which the first and the last view of Granada is obtained; they are the 'last sigh' of the Israelite exile." — *Sinai and Palestine*, chap. viii. § 6.

There are good grounds for concluding that this Psalm and the next constituted originally but one poem. The internal evidence favors this hypothesis. Besides the refrain at the end of xliii., which is the same as that which occurs twice in xlii. (ver. 5 [6] and 11 [12]), there is the remarkable coincidence of thought and language in xliii. 2 and xlii. 9 [10]. The longing, too, for the sanctuary in xliii. 3, 4, with the hope again to visit it, may be compared with the regret to which it answers in xlii. 4 [5]. Nor is external evidence wanting which points the same way. Thirty-seven of Kennicott's mss. and nine of De Rossi's have but one Psalm instead of two. The LXX, it is true, make a distinct Psalm of the forty-third. But, according to Delitzsch, an old Midrash which reckons one hundred and forty-seven Psalms in all, takes these two as one, as well as Psalms ix., x., and xxxii., xxxiii.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that each Psalm is complete in itself; and it is conceivable that, though originally existing as one poem, the present arrangement might have been adopted, the better to suit the purposes either of personal or liturgical use. The language

of the forty-third Psalm, it is obvious, might be used by those who were not in the circumstances indicated in the forty-second. We have traces of a similar separation in Psalm xl., the latter part of which appears in a detached form as Psalm lxx., and probably for the same reason.

Assuming, then, that the two Psalms are in fact one, the whole may be divided into three strophes, each consisting of five verses, and each closing with the same words.

I. The first expresses the longing of the soul after God and the service of his sanctuary (xlii. 1, 2); the deep sorrow<sup>(2)</sup> occasioned by the taunts of scoffing enemies (ver. 3); the attempt to find comfort<sup>(3)</sup> in the recollection of past occasions of spiritual blessing (ver. 4). The<sup>(1)</sup> expostulation at the close forms a refrain, with which the two following strophes are also concluded (ver. 5).

II. The sense of distance from God and of the loss of his presence<sup>(1)</sup> oppresses the soul yet more (ver. 6, 7); yet still there is the effort to<sup>(2)</sup> rise out of this despondency (ver. 8); but again the enemies who reproach and who triumph occupy the foreground, while God seems to<sup>(3)</sup> have forgotten, and his help to be far off (ver. 9). The expostulatory refrain recurs, as at the end of the first strophe.<sup>(4)</sup>

III. The tone here is throughout more hopeful. First there is the appeal to God's justice (xliii. 1); then the ground of that appeal (ver. 2 *a*); then a further expostulation (ver. 2 *b, c*); then the prayer for divine light and truth (ver. 3); and lastly, the confident hope of restoration to the land, and of being permitted again to join in the services of the sanctuary (ver. 4). The refrain, as before (ver. 5).

[To the Precentor. A Maskil, of the Sons of Korah.<sup>a</sup>]

I. 1 As a hart which panteth<sup>b</sup> after the water-brooks,  
       So panteth my soul after thee, O God.  
 2 My soul is athirst for God, for the living God:  
       When shall I come, and appear before God?

2. MY SOUL IS ATHIRST. The figure occurs again lxiii. 1 [2]. Comp. xxxvi. 8, 9 [9, 10], and Isa. xli. 17; lv. 1; Jer. ii. 13. Of this thirst Robertson beautifully says: "There is a desire in the human heart best described as the cravings of infinitude. We are so made that nothing which has limits satisfies. . . . Man's destiny is to be not dissatisfied, but forever unsatisfied. . . . Infinite good-

ness — a beauty beyond what eye hath seen or heart imagined, a justice which shall have no flaw and a righteousness which shall have no blemish — to crave for that, is to be 'athirst for God.'" (*Sermons*, 2d Series, pp. 120, 121.)

THE LIVING GOD. Comp. lxxxiv. 2 [3], not only as opposed to the gods of the heathen, nor as Stier suggests (and as the old Latin paraphrast, *fontem vivum*,

- 3 My tears have been my food day and night,  
 While they say unto me continually, "Where is thy God?"  
 4 These things would I remember,<sup>c</sup> and pour out my soul  
 in me,<sup>d</sup>—  
 How I passed with the (festal) throng,<sup>e</sup>  
 How I led them in procession<sup>f</sup> to the house of God,  
 With the voice of loud song and thanksgiving, — a multi-  
 tude keeping holy-day.

and the Anglo-Saxon *se libbenda wyll*), with an allusion to the expression "living waters"; but in opposition to all dead abstractions, all vague head-notions, as the living person, the source and fountain of all life, loving and loved in return, as xxxvi. 9 [10]. Again I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting from Robertson: "What we want is, we shall find, not infinitude, but a boundless *One*; not to feel that love is the *law* of this universe, but to feel *One* whose name is Love. For else if in this world of order there be no one in whose bosom that order is centred, and of whose being it is the expression; in this world of manifold contrivance no personal affection which gave to the skies their trembling tenderness and to the snow its purity: then order, affection, contrivance, wisdom, are only horrible abstractions, and we are in the dreary universe alone. . . . It is a dark moment when the sense of that personality is lost; more terrible than the doubt of immortality. For of the two — eternity without a personal God, or God for seventy years without immortality — no one after David's heart would hesitate. 'Give me God for life to know and be known by him.' No thought is more hideous than that of an eternity without him." Calvin interprets this longing for God, as a longing for his sanctuary and its ordinances. "Clamavit igitur David ad Deum . . . quia ab externo cultu erat exclusus, quod vinculum est sacrae cum Deo conjunctionis: non quod per se Deo nos ceremoniae concilient, sed quia pietatis sunt exercitia, quibus carere non sustinet nostra infirmitas.

Itaque a sanctuario exulans David, non aliter anxius est quam si a Deo ipso esset alienatus." And this is, no doubt, supported by the expression which follows:

WHEN SHALL I . . . APPEAR BEFORE GOD? For this is a phrase commonly used of going to the sanctuary or temple (lxxxiv. 7 [8]; Ex. xxiii. 17); and still more often "before the face of God," (Ex. xxxiv. 24; Deut. xvi. 16; xxxi. 11; 1 Sam. i. 22). Here the verb is construed with the simple accusative without a preposition, as in Ex. xxiii. 15; Isa. i. 12. But the longing for the sanctuary was because God's presence was there peculiarly manifested.

3. MY TEARS HAVE BEEN, etc.; i.e. they have been my daily portion, like my daily meal. See lxxx. 5 [6]; cii. 9 [10], and Job iii. 24. Cf. Plaut. *Asinar.* "pro cibo habes te verberari"; Ovid. *Metam.* x. 288, "Cura dolorque animi lacrimaeque alimenta fuere."

WHERE IS THY GOD? The bitterest of all taunts, see lxxix. 10; cxv. 2; Joel ii. 17; Micah vii. 10; and comp. xxii. 8 [9] with Matt. xxvii. 43. "This is ever the way in religious perplexity: the unsympathizing world taunts or misunderstands. In spiritual grief they ask, Why is he not like others? In bereavements they call your deep sorrow unbelief. In misfortune they comfort you, like Job's friends, by calling it a visitation . . . they call you an infidel, though your soul be crying after God. Specially in that dark and awful hour, 'Eloi, Eloi,' he called on God: they said, 'Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.'" — Robertson.

4. THESE THINGS WOULD I REMEM



5 Why art thou bowed down, O my soul,  
 And (why) art thou disquieted in me?  
 Hope in God; for I shall yet give him thanks,  
 (Who is) the health of my countenance and my God.<sup>6</sup>

BER; or, "let me remember," "fain would I remember." In such a recollection there would be mingled feelings of bitterness and consolation. No doubt the thought of those happy days in which he had travelled with the festal caravan to the holy city, would make him feel more intensely his present loneliness, but it would also be a kind of solace in his sorrow, or, as Delitzsch terms it, "a bitter-sweet remembrance."

THESE THINGS; viz. what follows how I once led the rejoicing multitudes in procession to the house of God. On the construction, see Critical Note.

WITH THE VOICE OF LOUD SONG, etc. These pilgrim caravans went up to Jerusalem with all the accompaniments of music and song (see 2 Sam. vi. 5 and the beautiful little collection of pilgrim songs preserved in Psalms cxx.—cxxxiv., which were inspired by, and adapted to, such occasions).

A MULTITUDE (a word occurring with the same reference, 2 Sam. vi. 19), in apposition with the THROG mentioned above; KEEPING HOLY-DAY, or festival; the word is used absolutely, as in Ex. xxiii. 14.

5. WHY ART THOU BOWED DOWN? lit. "Why bowest thou thyself down?" The verb only occurs here and in the next Psalm, in this reflexive form (Hithpael). "David here presents himself to us," says Calvin, "divided into two parts." It is the struggle between the spirit of faith and the spirit of dejection, between the higher nature and the lower, between the spirit and the flesh. The true I speaks; the faith which is born of God rebukes the depression and gloom of his natural infirmity.

DISQUIETED; a word used elsewhere of the raging and roaring of the sea (as xli. 3 [4]): his soul is tossed and agitated like an angry sea.

HOPE. "Distinguish between the *feel-*  
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ings of faith that God is present, and the *hope* of faith that he will be so. . . . There are hours in which physical derangement darkens the windows of the soul; days in which shattered nerves make life simply endurance; months and years in which intellectual difficulties, pressing for solution, shut out God. Then faith must be replaced by hope. 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.' 'Clouds and darkness are round about him; but righteousness and truth are the habitation of his throne.' 'My soul, hope thou,' etc.—Robertson.

IN GOD. "This hope was in God. The mistake we make," says Robertson, "is to look for a source of comfort in ourselves; self-contemplation, instead of gazing upon God"; and then, after showing that it is impossible to derive consolation from our own *feelings*, because they are so variable, or from our own *acts*, because in a low state no man can judge of these aright, and warning us that besides, whilst engaged in this self-inspection, we lose time in remorse, he continues, "When we gaze on God, then first the chance of consolation dawns. He is not affected by our mutability; our changes do not alter him. When we are restless, he remains serene and calm; when we are low, selfish, mean, or dispirited, he is still the unalterable I AM, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. What God is in himself, not what we may chance to feel him in this or that moment to be, that is our hope. 'My soul, hope thou IN GOD.'"

I SHALL YET GIVE HIM THANKS; i.e. I shall do again as I have done before. Once I went . . . with the voice of song and *thanksgiving* (ver. 4), . . . and again I shall *give* him thanks.

6. The first division of the Psalm ends

## II. 6 [My God,] my soul is bowed down in me :

Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,  
And (from) the Hermons, from the mountain of Mizar.

## 7 Deep calleth unto deep at the voice of thy cataracts ;

All thy breakers and thy billows have passed over me.

with the expostulation addressed to the soul in its despondency, "Why art thou cast down?" and with an effort to rise into a brighter region of hope. But the gloom is too deep to be so soon dispersed. Therefore this second strophe opens with the complaint, "My soul is bowed down." Throughout this second portion of the Psalm, the constant fluctuations, the alternations of despondency and hope, are very remarkable. "My soul is cast down,—therefore will I remember thee. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me,—Jehovah will command his loving-kindness. I will pray unto God,—though my prayer be nothing but the outpouring of my complaint. God is my rock,—even whilst I say, Why hast thou forgotten me?"

MY SOUL IS BOWED DOWN. The rendering of the LXX here, *ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐπαρέχθη*, and that in the previous verse, of the words, Why art thou cast down, etc., *τί περίλυπος εἶ ἡ ψυχὴ μου*, are both appropriated by our Lord; the former in John xii. 27, the latter in Matt. xxvi. 38.

THEREFORE DO I REMEMBER, in that strange land so much the more. Comp. the prayer of Jonah, ii. 8.

THE LAND OF JORDAN; i.e. as mentioned in the introduction, the country east of the Jordan, which had this special designation.

THE HERMONS, or the peaks or ridges of Hermon, the plural being used either because of the *two* peaks of the mountain (Wilson, *Land of the Bible*, ii. 161), or perhaps with reference to the whole range of its snowy heights.

MIZAR, apparently the name of some one of the lesser peaks of the same mountain range, though the particular peak cannot now be identified. The older translators generally supposed the

word to be used merely as an appellative, in its literal sense, of "littleness" or "contempt" (comp. the play on the word "Zoar," from the same root, Gen. xix. 20), as if the sacred poet were anxious to express how little in his eyes seemed even that giant range, with all its snows and forests, compared with the true greatness and dignity of the holy hill of Zion; as Rosenm. explains, "*Religionis studio ita ardebat ut sorderent ei prae monte Sion omnia.*" But the objection to such an interpretation is, that the Hebrew poets do not seek to depreciate the greater mountains of Hermon and Bashan, in comparison with Zion, but rather to raise Zion to a level, or to exalt it above these. Hengstenberg supposes that the name of "contempt" designates not the particular mountain, but the whole trans-Jordanic territory.

7. DEEP CALLETH UNTO DEEP. An image borrowed, Stanley thinks (see the passage quoted in the introduction to this Psalm), from the winding rapids of the Jordan; Delitzsch, from the rushing mountain torrents which dashed and foamed before his eyes. But so common an image as that in which sorrows and calamities are compared to floods and waves (see xviii. 16 [17]), need not have been suggested by any external object then immediately present. Besides, the word "deep" is properly used only of "the sea" or of "the great subterranean reservoir of waters" (Gen. vii. 11), and probably it is used in this last sense even in Ezek. xxxi. 4, 15, where the cedars of Lebanon are supposed to be nourished by it. One vast body of water seems to summon another, as if on purpose to swallow him up. Comp. Eur. *Suppl.* 614, *δῖκα δῖκαν κάλεσσε καὶ φόνος φόνον.*

AT THE VOICE OF, i.e. accompanied

8 (Yet) in the day-time will Jehovah command his loving-kindness ;

And in the night his song (will be) with me,

A prayer unto the God of my life.

9 (So) will I say unto God my Rock, "Why hast thou forgottèn me ?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ? "

10 As though they would break<sup>h</sup> my bones, mine enemies reproach me,

While they say unto me all day long, "Where is thy God ? "

11 Why art thou bowed down, O my soul,  
And (why) art thou disquieted in me ?

Hope in God ; for I shall yet praise him,

(Who is) the health of my countenance, and my God.

### XLIII.

III. 1 JUDGE me, O God,

And plead my cause against an ungodly nation ;

From the man of deceit and wrong rescue me !

by the sound of, etc. **THY CATARACTS**, or waterfalls ; such seems to be the meaning here. **LXX**, καταρρακται. The only other place where the word occurs is 2 Sam. v. 8, where it is in the singular, and is rendered in the E.V. "the gutter," but probably means rather "the water-course." Hence it would appear that, like many other words (נַחַל for instance), it might denote both the bed or channel itself, and the water in the channel. (Comp. צִנְהָר, Zech. iv. 12).

**BREAKERS . . . BILLOWS**. The first, from the verb שָׁבַר (*shābhar*), "shiver, break," with the same idea in Hebrew as in English, of the waves *breaking* on the shore ; the last of the waves as *rolling*.

**8. WILL COMMAND**. Clearly not to be referred to the past, as Kimchi and others have supposed. It is a bright ray of hope which gleams upon the singer

in the midst of his present despondency. God will command, — send, that is, like a divine Iris, or heavenly messenger, his loving-kindness. So xliii. 3, "Send thy light and thy truth," etc.

**IN THE NIGHT**, not to be emphasized, as if intended in opposition to **IN THE DAY** ; but day and night are used poetically to describe the *continuance* of the action.

**HIS SONG** ; comp. Job. xxxv. 10.

**9. (So) WILL I SAY**. The resolve which follows (expressed by the optative form of the verb), based on this his hope in the goodness of God.

**1. JUDGE ME** ; i.e. "show the justice of my cause," "pronounce sentence for me," as often elsewhere. **AGAINST** ; lit. "from." A brief form of expression for the fuller, "Plead my cause, so as to deliver me from."

- 2 For thou art the God of my strength :  
 Why hast thou cast me off ;  
 Why go I to and fro mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ?
- 3 Oh send thy light and thy truth ; let *them* lead me,  
 Let them bring me to thy holy mountain, and to thy tabernacles.
- 4 So let me come unto the altar of God,  
 Unto God my exceeding joy :  
 Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.
- 5 Why art thou bowed down, O my soul,  
 And why art thou disquieted in me ?  
 Hope in God ; for I shall yet praise him,  
 (Who is) the health of my countenance, and my God.

UNGODLY ; lit. "not godly," or, perhaps, "not-good," if the adjective be taken here as in xii. 1 [2], in its active sense ; hence "cruel," "unmerciful."

2. The question is repeated from xlii. 9 [10], but in a stronger form. Not "Why hast thou forgotten?" but "Why hast thou cast off?"

3. The one object of his heart's desire is to be restored to the house of God.

LIGHT and TRUTH (instead of the more usual loving-kindness and truth) — these shall be to him, so he hopes, as angels of God, who shall lead him by

the hand, till they bring him to the holy mountain, to the tabernacle, and to the altar, there to offer his thank-offerings. Or possibly there may be an allusion to the urim and thummim, as the symbol of light and truth. See the article "Urim and Thummim," by the Rev. E. H. Plumptre, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

TABERNACLES. The plural may denote the *several parts* of the building ; but see on lxxxiv. 1.

4. GOD MY EXCEEDING JOY ; lit. "God the joy of my exultation."

מְשֻׁבֵּל. See note \* on Psalm xxxii.

לְבָנֵי קִרְחָה. These words are first found in the inscription of this and the six following Psalms. Jebb supposes this title to denote not the authors of the Psalms, but the Levitical singers and musicians *for* whom they were composed. He would, therefore, take the לְבָנֵי not as in לְבָנֵי, but as in לְבָנֵי. It is more natural, however, to consider the לְבָנֵי here as expressive of authorship ; and so the LXX, τοῖς υἱοῖς Κορέ, as in other Psalms, τῷ Λαυῖδ. It is remarkable that the inscription should assume this anonymous character, mentioning not the individual singer, but only the family to which he belonged ; especially when, as Delitzsch has remarked, we have in the inscriptions of other Psalms (as, for instance, lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) the individual לְבָנֵי, instead of the family לְבָנֵי-קִרְחָה, or the like. This may be owing to some circumstance with



which we are unacquainted. These Levitical singers may have been like the Bardic families or colleges in other nations, especially those living in mountain regions. All may have made poetry and music their profession, and only in rare cases did an individual, perhaps like Asaph, acquire great personal reputation. The "Korah" whose "sons" are here spoken of, is the Levite who headed the insurrection against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness (Num. xvi.) We find his descendants existing as a powerful Levitical family in the time of David, at least if they are to be identified, as is probable, with the Korahites mentioned in 1 Chron. xii. 6, who, like our own warlike bishops of former times, seem to have known how to doff the priestly vestment for the soldier's armor, and whose hand could wield the sword as well as strike the harp. These Korahites were a part of the band who acknowledged David as their chief at Ziklag; warriors "whose faces," it is said, "were like the faces of lions, and who were (for speed) like gazelles upon the mountains." According to 1 Chron. ix. 17, the Korahites were, in David's time, keepers of the threshold of the Tabernacle; and still earlier, in the time of Moses, watchmen at the entrance of the camp of the Levites. In 1 Chron. xxvi. 1-19, we find two branches of this family associated with that of Merari, as guardians of the doors of the Temple. There is probably an allusion to this their office, in lxxxiv. 11. But the Korahites were also celebrated musicians and singers, 1 Chron. vi. 16-33, where Heman, one of the three famous musicians of the time, is said to be a Korahite (comp. 1 Chron. xxv.) The musical reputation of the family continued in the time of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 19, where we have the peculiar doubly plural form **בְּנֵי הַקֹּרָחִים**, "sons of the Korahites."

✓ **תִּצְרִיב**. We have three points to consider with reference to this verb: (1) its meaning, (2) its gender, (3) its construction in the sentence.

(1) The word only occurs here and Joel i. 20, where it is spoken of "the beasts of the field." The older interpreters seem to have guessed at the meaning of the word, as they explain it differently in the two passages. Here the LXX have *ἐπιποθεῖ*; similarly the Chald., **מְרַגֵּב**. Jerome renders: "Sicut areola praeeparata ad irrigationes aquarum; sic anima mea praeeparata (h. desiderat) ad te, Deus." In Joel i. 20, the LXX have *ἀνέβλεψαν*; Chald., **מִסְבָּרִי**; Jerome, *suspeperunt*, but he has there the remarkable gloss, *quasi area sitiens imbrem*, which seems to have been borrowed from this Psalm, and looks as if he wished to explain both the verb and the preposition **אֶל**, by his rendering; the *suspeperunt* referring to the latter, and the *sitiens*, etc. to the former.

The Rabbinical commentators, following the lead of the Syr., suppose the word to describe the peculiar cry of the stag, as גִּיחַ does the lowing of the ox, and שֹׁאֵן the roar of the lion. The word, however, is probably cognate in root with the Arab. عَرَج, which means (not as Gesen. *ascendere*, and hence with the prepos., *desiderare, appetere*, but) *inclinare, flectere*. Comp. عَرَج, *ad occasum vergere*, II. V. *intentum esse, instare*, etc. So Hupfeld. It is evident from the passage in Joel, as well as from this, that the word is used properly of the *longing* of animals for *water*. It is said there, “that the water-brooks are dried up”; it expresses, therefore, the *panting* of the stag in the burning heat of the steppes, or perhaps when hard pressed by the hunters. The Greek ὀρέγεσθαι is apparently a kindred root.

(2) The verb is fem., though the noun אֵיִל is properly masc. The irregularity is best explained by regarding אֵיִל as a collect. or epicoene noun (like שׁוֹר, תַּמּוֹר).

(3) As regards the construction, כִּי is usually taken here as a *conjunction*, as a matter of course, as if it were = כַּאֲשֶׁר, “as a hart panteth.” Its normal use as a particle of comparison is certainly as a preposition; so that it belongs only to the noun to which it is prefixed. The accentuation, too, commonly restricts it to the noun, and separates it from the following verbal clause, which must consequently be a relative clause. So here, כִּי אֵיִל will be, “As a hart *which* panteth.” Hupfeld, indeed, maintains that כִּי can be used as a conjunction, and gives several passages in which he says such a construction is necessary, xc. 5; cxxv. 1; Isa. liii. 7; lxi. 11. In all these passages the ordinary construction of כִּי as a prep. is not only admissible, but preferable.

✓ <sup>e</sup> אֶזְכְּרָה, optative. Two constructions are possible; either that of the E. V., “When I remember these things, then I pour out my soul in me; *for*,” etc., in which case the paragogic form is used both in protasis and apodosis, and the apodosis is introduced by הִי. So Ewald. Comp. the use of הִי paragog. in the protasis xl. 6). Or, the second clause may be parenthetical. “Fain would I remember these things—and (in the remembrance) pour out my soul—*how*,” etc. In this case כִּי depends on the verb אֶזְכְּרָה, and, in fact, explains אֵלַהּ. Hence Mendelssohn paraphrases: “Ueber mich ergiesst sich meine Seele, wenn ich denke wie ich mit Gefolg,” etc.

<sup>d</sup> עָלַי, lit. “upon me,” “with me,” *penes me*, as (besides ver. 6, 7, 12 in this, and ver. 5 in the next Psalm) in cxlii. 4; cxliii. 4, when it is parallel with בְּהוֹכִי. Comp. Job xxx. 16.

<sup>e</sup> סָכָה, only occurring here, but kindred with סָךְ, סָכָה (Chald. סָךְ),

properly *a thicket*, and so any dense interwoven mass ; here, the densely-crowded caravan of pilgrims to the holy city. The LXX, ἐν τόπῳ σκηνῆς θαυμαστῆς, supposing the tabernacle to be meant, and so the Ethiop., but Rashi rightly בני אדם.

✓ <sup>f</sup> אָהָרָם, Hithp., of a ררה, not in use, for אָהָרָה ; occurs only here and Isa. xxxviii. 15, “to move slowly,” here of the slow march of the procession ; but the pronom. suffix with the Hithp. is an anomaly, as the suffix must then = לָהֶם or עִמָּהֶם ; the Hithp. cannot have the transitive meaning “to lead.” Hence, either the suffix should be omitted ; or we should point אָהָרָם, Piel. The Piel הָרָה is found in the Talmud, and means there “to lead children and young animals.” This verb and the preceding אָעִיבֹר are both proper imperfects, as expressing a past habit. See Mason and Bernard’s Gram. ii. 142.

✓ <sup>g</sup> According to the present Hebrew text, וְשִׁוְכוֹת פָּנָיו, we must render with the E. V., “for the help of his countenance” (so the Chald.) ; or with Aben-Ezra, “his countenance or presence is salvation.” But in both the other instances of the refrain, ver. 11 [12], and xliii. 5, the reading is וְפָנֵי יְהוֹאֲחִי, and this may have been the case originally here, as the next verse now begins with אֶלְהִי. The alteration is extremely slight—the removal merely of the ו from the end of the one word to the beginning of the next ; אֶלְהִי פָנֵי יְהוֹאֲחִי instead of וְפָנֵי יְהוֹאֲחִי. Hengst. argues, on the other hand, that slight variations are of constant occurrence in the refrains of other Psalms (xlix. 13, 21 ; lvi. 5, 11 ; lix. 10, 18), and thinks that the address to God is necessary at the beginning of the next verse. It is, I think, more natural, notwithstanding Hupfeld’s remark to the contrary, that the next verse should contain a direct address to God. In xliii. 1, we have in like manner a direct address after the refrain. In this case the reading may have been originally וְפָנֵי יְהוֹאֲחִי : אֶלְהִי, and the repetition of the word may have occasioned first its omission at the end of ver. 5 [6], and then the alteration of the text.

✓ <sup>h</sup> הִרְצָה ב', “a breaking *in* my bones,” instead of “a breaking *of*,” etc. The first ב before הִרְצָה (lit. “consisting in”) serves here, in some measure, to introduce a comparison, comp. xxxvii. 20. Hence “With a breaking in my bones,” — “like a shattering blow, crushing the very bones, is the taunt of the foe.” Comp. lxix. 21. הִרְצָה is, properly, “breaking,” — as in Ezek. xxi. 27, and the verb in Psalm lxii. 4, in both of which passages it is used of the breaking down of walls ; LXX, καταλᾶσθαι — not “murder,” as Symm., ὡς σφαγὴν διὰ τῶν ὀστέων μου ; Luther, “als Mord” ; nor as in E. V., “as with a sword.”

## PSALM XLIV.

THERE is scarcely any Psalm which seems at first sight to furnish a more decided clue to the probable date of its composition than this, and yet leaves us, after all, in so much uncertainty. The notes of time are apparently three.

1. The conquest of Palestine was looked back upon as distant, — “the times of old.”

2. The period was a period of great national distress; the people were hard pressed by enemies.

3. All this had come on them *not* as a judgment for national sin; hence the age must have been one when the nation was holding fast to the worship of Jehovah and eschewing idolatry.

This last circumstance is so peculiar, that we might expect it to decide the question.

Now we know of no period of Jewish history previous to the Exile, when the assertion would be true that the people had not forgotten God, nor “stretched out their hands to any strange god.” Hence many interpreters refer the Psalm to the time of the Maccabees, and the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. v. 11–23). The nation was then free from the taint of idolatry, and it suffered cruelly. So far as the internal evidence goes, it is unquestionably in favor of this period. But the history of the Canon is said to be against it. Gesenius and others have argued, that Psalms composed at so late a date would not have been received into the Canon, which was finally settled in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. This, however, is an entire mistake. The formation of the Canon was a slow and gradual work, extending over a very considerable period of time, and cannot be said to have been finally completed before the age of the Maccabees. See the able article on the Canon by Mr. Westcott in Dr. Smith’s *Dict. of the Bible*.

Some, as De Wette (in his last edition) and Tholuck, refer the Psalm to the time immediately preceding the Exile, after Josiah’s reforms; others, to the Exile itself, or the interval between the rebuilding of the Temple and Nehemiah’s arrival in Jerusalem.

Others, again, as Hengstenberg, Keil, and Delitzsch, suppose the Psalm to have been written in the time of David; and to have been occasioned by an invasion of the Edomites into the land which was left defenceless during the time that David was engaged in his wars with the Syrians (2 Sam. viii. 13, where, no doubt, אֱדוֹם *Edom*, LXX, ἑδωμ



Ἰδουμαίαν, should be read, instead of אֲרָם, Aram, or Syria), and hence the fearful vengeance which he took upon them; see verse 14, and comp. 1 Kings xi. 15. They refer Psalm lx. to the same occasion,—to the time, that is, which elapsed between the Edomite invasion, when some Israelites were carried away (hence the complaint, “Thou hast scattered us among the heathen,”) and the retribution which was executed by Joab. But this is obviously an improbable view. The language of the Psalm is altogether too large to be applied to a sudden attack. It describes a more serious and lasting calamity.

Calvin says with perfect truth that, if anything is clear, it is that the Psalm was written by any one rather than by David. The complaints which it contains, he observes, are most suitable to the wretched and calamitous time when the cruel tyranny of Antiochus was exercised without check; or we may extend it more widely, inasmuch as almost any time after the return from the Exile was a time of trouble and rebuke.

This Psalm, if not composed in the time of the Maccabees, was, we are told, used daily in the liturgy of that time. Each day the Levites ascended the pulpit (רִיבֹן) and cried aloud, “Awake, why sleepest thou, O Jehovah?” These Levitical muezzin were termed “wakers” (מְעַרְרִים). John Hyrcanus put an end to this custom, saying, “Doth God sleep? Hath not the Scripture said, ‘The Keeper of Israel slumbereth not, nor sleepeth.’ It was only in reference to a time when Israel was in trouble, and the nations in rest and prosperity, that it was said, ‘Awake, why sleepest thou, O Jehovah?’” (See Delitzsch, i. 342, note 2).

The Psalm consists of four principal divisions:

I. The sacred poet calls to mind the great deeds which God had wrought for his people in the days of old. God alone, he confesses, had given them possession of the land of Canaan, and had driven out their enemies before them. Remembering this, they had ever made their boast in his name, and would still continue to praise him (ver. 1-8).

II. Most painful is the contrast of the present with the past. God has forgotten his people. He has given them over into the hand of enemies, who hate and insult and slay them. God goes not forth now with their armies, as he had done when he brought them into Canaan; they are scattered among the heathen and sold for nought (ver 9-16).

III. And yet this cannot be a chastisement for their transgressions; for they have not forgotten God, but, on the contrary, die the death of martyrs for his truth (ver. 17-22).

IV. Therefore he prays that God the Saviour of his people, and the giver of victory, would again be favorable unto them, as of old, and redeem them from their enemies (ver. 23-26).

[For the Precentor. Of the Sons of Korah. A Maskil.]

- I. 1 O God, with our own ears we have heard,  
     Our fathers have told us,  
 A work thou didst work in their days,  
     In the days of old.  
 2 Thou, (with) thine own hand, didst dispossess (the) nations,  
     And didst plant *them* in :  
 Thou didst afflict (the) peoples,  
     And cause *them* to spread abroad.

1. The Psalm opens with a glance at the past history of the nation, and the acknowledgment that from the first, every victory which they had won, had been won, not by their own strength, but by the immediate hand of God. This was, it might be said, the perpetual lesson of their history. They did not rise upon their Egyptian masters, but God bowed the heart of the monarch and the people by his signs and wonders, till they thrust them out in haste. At the Red Sea they did not turn to fight with the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh: they were but to *stand still*, and see the victory of Jehovah. When they came to Canaan, their first exploit was not a feat of arms; for Jericho fell by a miracle. The Roman army, by the lake Regillus, attributed its victory to the two mysterious horsemen who, on their white horses, led the charge. The Jewish host, with a better faith, believed that in every battle an invisible captain led them, and knew that whenever they conquered their enemies, it was because an invisible arm gave them the victory.

OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US, in accordance with the duty so often impressed upon the minds of the people, to perpetuate from generation to generation "the mighty acts" of Jehovah,

on their behalf. See Ex. x. 2, and comp. xii. 26, etc., xiii. 8, 14; Deut. vi. 10; Judges vi. 13.

A WORK; emphatic, as in lxiv. 9 [10]; xcv. 9. The same phrase, "to work a work," "do a deed," occurs with like meaning in Hab. i. 5. It seems to be employed here collectively, gathering up in one the deliverance from Egypt, the guidance through the wilderness, and the settlement in Canaan. As regards the construction, this may either be an independent clause, or it may be a relative clause, with the common omission of the relative, "Our fathers have told us a work (which) thou didst," etc.

2. THINE HAND. It is simplest, I think, to take this as the accusative of the instrument, as is usual in Hebrew, though Hupfeld contends for a double subject: "Thou, thy hand," as Isa. xlv. 12, "I, my hands," and as he also explains, Ps. iii. 4 [5], "my voice, I cry."

DIDST PLANT *them* IN . . . DIDST SPREAD *them* ABROAD. In each case the pronoun refers to "our fathers," who are thus emphatically contrasted with the "nations" and "peoples" who were dispossessed. The figure is taken from the planting and growth of a vine, and is carried out in Ps. lxxx. It first occurs in Ex. xv. 17, "Thou wilt *plant* them in the mountain of thine inheritance."

- 3 For not by their own sword gat they the land in possession,  
Neither did their own arm give them the victory;  
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy  
countenance,  
Because thou hadst a favor unto them.
- 4 Thou, even thou thyself,<sup>a</sup> art my King, O God;  
Command the victories of Jacob.
- 5 Through thee do we push down our adversaries;  
In thy name do we tread them under that rise up against  
us.
- 6 For not in my bow do I trust,  
And my sword cannot give me the victory:
- 7 But THOU hast given us the victory over our adversaries,  
And hast put to shame them that hate us.
- 8 In God have we made our boast<sup>b</sup> all the day,  
And to thy name will we forever give thanks. [Selah.]

Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 10, and Ps. lxxx. 8 [9]. For the other verb, "Thou didst spread them abroad" (like the roots and branches of a tree), comp. lxxx. 11 [12]; Jer. xvii. 8; Ezek. xvii. 6. "Veteres incolas terrae Chanaan comparat arboribus, quia longa possessione illic radices egerant. Subita igitur quae contigit mutatio perinde fuit ac si quis revulsis arboribus in earum locum alias substituat."—*Calvin*.

3. **FOR**, a more emphatic insisting upon the truth that God's power alone had achieved all.

**GIVE THEM THE VICTORY.** Such seems here, and generally in this Psalm, to be the force of the word usually rendered "save," "help." See above, xxxiii. 17. Not very unlike is the use of *σωτηρια* sometimes in the New Testament. Cf., for instance, 1 Pet. i. 5, where, as Alford remarks, it has more than a negative idea.

The **RIGHT HAND** and the **ARM**, as emblems of *power*; the **LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE**, as the manifestation of God's *grace*; the last further explained by, "because thou hadst a favor," etc. Comp. Deut. iv. 37.

4-8. Application of this acknowledged truth to the present and to the future.

4. **MY KING**, apparently with a personal application to himself, the poet individually claiming his own place in the covenant between God and his people. The singular fluctuates with the plural in the Psalm; see verses 6 and 15, where the individual is again prominent.

**COMMAND**, in thy royal majesty, as an act of sovereign authority.

5. **PUSH DOWN**, an image taken from horned cattle, and of common occurrence in the Old Testament, borrowed, in the first instance, it would seem, from the fat buffaloes in the pastures of Bashan. See Deut. xxxiii. 17. Comp. also Ps. lxxv. 4 [5], 10 [11]; Ezek. xxxiv. 21; Dan. viii. 4; 1 Kings xxii. 11.

**TREAD UNDER**, as lx. 12 [14]; Isa. xiv. 19, 25; lxiii. 6. The verbs in this verse are strictly aorists of repeated action.

6. The same contrast here and in the next verse as before in verse 3.

8. The past experience of God's saving might is the reason that they praise and thank him.

- II. 9 But<sup>e</sup> thou hast cast (us) off, and put us to confusion,  
 And goest not forth with our hosts.
- 10 Thou makest us to turn back from (the) adversary,  
 And they which hate us have spoiled for themselves :
- 11 Thou makest us like sheep (appointed for) food,  
 And thou hast scattered us among the nations.
- 12 Thou sellest thy people for nought,  
 And hast not increased (thy wealth) by their price.

9-16. The painful contrast in the experience of the present, to all the warrant of the past, and all the hopes which had sprung from the past.

9. THOU HAST CAST OFF (the objective omitted, as in verse 23 [24], and in lxxvii. 7 [8]; lxxxix. 38 [39]), preterite, expressing the completed action, whilst the following future (or present) "goest forth" expresses the *consequence* of the action. Comp. xlv. 6 [7], "He uttered his voice (past action); the earth melteth (consequence)."

GOEST NOT FORTH; i.e. as leader of the army (see Judges iv. 14; 2 Sam. v. 24), as once visibly with the pillar of a cloud, and the pillar of fire before the host in the desert. This verse occurs almost word for word in Ps. lx., with which, and lxxxix., this Psalm has many points of resemblance.

10. FOR THEMSELVES. "At their own will"; as Calvin well explains: "Quod hostes pro arbitrio et sine ulla repugnantia quasi suam praedam diripuerint."

11. MAKEST US LIKE. See the same construction in Isa. xli. 2; Ezek. xvi. 7.

HAST SCATTERED. This may, perhaps, refer to the Babylonish captivity. De Wette, however, who in the first edition of his Commentary thought this and the next verse most applicable to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, quotes 2 Macc. v. 11-23, where we are informed that Antiochus Epiphanes, on his return from Egypt, carried Jerusalem by storm, slew in three days forty thousand Jews, and had as many more sold as captives. Hence, according to him, the allusion in the following verse.

12. THOU SELLEST. This need not be explained literally of an historical fact (see note on last verse): it is a figure expressive of God's giving up his people into *slavery* to their enemies, just as, on the other hand, their deliverance is described as *redemption*, *ransoming*. The figure, Hupfeld thinks, is borrowed from the right of the father to sell his children as slaves; but the Jewish law gave him no such right, the case mentioned in Ex. xxi. 7 being altogether exceptional. We have the same figure in Deut. xxxii. 30; Judges ii. 14; iii. 8, and in many other passages.

FOR NOUGHT; lit. "for not-riches," i.e. for that which is the very opposite of riches, a mere nothing. Comp. for similar composition of nouns with the negative, Isa. x. 15, "not-wood," i.e. something the very opposite of wood; Ps. xxii. 6 [7], "not-man," etc., and for the idea, Isa. lii. 3; Jer. xv. 13.

HAST NOT INCREASED; i.e. hast gained nothing. The verb is used absolutely, as the Hiph. in Prov. xxii. 16, "he that oppreseth the poor to *make himself rich*." This verse is almost an expostulation with God. An earthly ruler might sell men like cattle to increase his own wealth, but God cannot be richer by such merchandise. Calvin's remark, however, is of importance, as bearing on all this attributing of their calamities to God; "We must observe, however, that God is represented as the author of these calamities, not by way of reproaching him (*non obstrependi causa*), but that the faithful may with the more confidence seek the remedy from the hand which hath smitten and wounded."



- 13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors,  
 A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
- 14 Thou makest us a proverb among the nations,  
 A shaking of the head among the peoples.
- 15 All the day is my confusion before me,  
 And the shame of my face hath covered me ;
- 16 Because of the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth,  
 Because of the enemy and the avenger.

"THEM THAT ARE ROUND ABOUT US (lit. "our surroundings," lxxix. 4, comp. lxxx. 6 [7]), i.e. nations like the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, the bitterest enemies of the Jews, whose insulting mockery in the day of their triumph is often the subject of complaint in the later prophets.

14. A PROVERB (*māshāl*) or "by-word," often used of words uttered in mockery. Comp. lxxix. 11 [12]; Isa. xiv. 4, possibly also the verb, Numb. xxi. 27 ("they that speak in proverbs," E.V.), where the taunting Amorite song is quoted.

SHAKING OF THE HEAD. See on xxii. 7 [8].

15. THE SHAME, etc. This rendering is favored by the accent (Tiphecha conj.), the shame seen in the face being regarded as a mantle enveloping the whole man, the construction being the same as in xlix. 6, "the iniquity of my heels compasseth me about," where see note; but the grammatical construction may be that of the double object, "shame hath covered me as to my face." The meaning here is evident from the simpler phrase in lxxix. 7 [8].

16. THE AVENGER. See on viii. 2 [3].

17-22. A complaint that all these calamities have come upon them without any fault or demerit on the part of the nation. Such a complaint is doubly remarkable. First, because as an assertion of *national* innocence and faithfulness to God's covenant, it is without parallel in the Old Testament, and next, because it wears the air of a reproach cast upon

the righteousness of God, in permitting the chastisement.

(1) We often find an *individual* declaring that he suffers unjustly for the sake of God, and appealing to God to do him right, because of his innocence. Comp. lxxix. 7 [8], "*For thy sake*," etc., and Jer. xv. 15; Isa. lxvi. 5, etc. But here the whole nation is said to have adhered steadfastly to God, and, because of this steadfastness, to have brought upon themselves persecution. The expression, "*For thy sake*," has been supposed to indicate that the persecution was a religious one, that the sufferers were martyrs for their faith; and hence it has been inferred that the Psalm was written in the time of the Maccabees, the only time in which the nation, as a nation, so suffered. The national abjuration of idolatry (ver. 20), seems also to show that the date of the Psalm must be subsequent to the exile. It is not certain, indeed, that the words of verse 22 refer to *religious persecution*. The language would hold good of all sufferings endured *in the service of God* (as Hupfeld observes, referring to 1 Sam. xvii. 45; Isa. x. 9 ff.; xxxvi. 18 ff.; xxxvii. 4, 10 ff.). But we know of no earlier period in Jewish history when it could be said with truth of the nation at large, "Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy path."

(2) It is on the ground of this national adherence to the covenant, that the Psalmist expostulates with God, who has given them over into the hand of their enemies. Such chastisement ap-

III. 17 All this is come upon us, and (yet) we have not forgotten thee,

Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant ;

18 Our heart has not turned back,

Neither has our step declined from thy path,

19 That<sup>d</sup> thou hast crushed us in the place of jackals,

And covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God,

And stretched out our hands to any strange god,

21 Would not God search this out ?

For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 But for thy sake are we slain all the day long ;

We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

IV. 23 Up, why sleepest thou, O Lord ?

Awake, cast not off forever.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face ?

Why forgettest thou our affliction (and) our oppression ?

pears to him unmerited. There is nothing apparently in the conduct of the nation at large to call for it. God seems pledged by his very faithfulness to take away the rod. Such an expostulation, however, it is clear, can only be defended as coming from a saint under the Old Testament dispensation. No nation, no church now could, in the eyes of any of its members, be so pure, that chastisement laid upon it would seem undeserved or unneeded. The work of the Spirit has given a deeper view of sin, has shown how much hidden corruption may consist with the open profession of godliness, and has taught us to confess national guilt in every national punishment.

17. IS COME UPON US. The construction is the same as in xxxv. 8 ; xxxvi. 11 [12]. Comp. Judges vi. 13.

18. The negative must be repeated with the second clause of the verse from the first.

19. PLACE OF JACKALS, a dreary, waste, howling wilderness, commonly described by the prophets as inhabited

by such creatures (Aq. ἐν τόπῳ ἀοικήτων). See the similar expression, "a dwelling of jackals," used with a like figurative meaning, Jer. ix. 10 ; x. 22, etc.

20. STRETCHED OUT OUR HANDS, i.e. in prayer. Comp. cxliii. 6, and see xxviii. 2.

21. This solemn appeal to God's omniscience shows the honest conviction of the national integrity, while it is an indication at the same time that the sense of sin was comparatively superficial.

22. FOR THY SAKE. This passage is cited by St. Paul (Rom. viii. 36), apparently from the LXX, in illustration of the fact, that the church of God has in all ages been a persecuted church. But there is this remarkable difference between the tone of the Psalmist and the tone of the apostle. The former cannot understand the chastening, complains that God's heavy hand has been laid without cause upon his people ; the latter can rejoice in persecutions also, and exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

23. AWAKE, etc. See vii. 6 [7].

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust ;

Our body cleaveth to the earth.

26 Do thou arise, to be a help unto us !

And redeem us, for thy loving-kindness' sake.

25. IS BOWED DOWN. Cf. xlii. 5[6]. the custom of mourners sitting down in CLEAVETH TO THE EARTH, alluding to dust and ashes. See xxxv. 14.

<sup>a</sup> אֶתְהַדְּהִיָּא. The pronoun of the third person is thus subjoined to the pronouns of the first or second person, in order to render them emphatic, like αὐτός in Greek. So the LXX here, σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς μου. Comp. Isa. xliii. 25, 'אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מִלְּחָמָה יִג'; 2 Sam. vii. 28, אֶתְהַדְּהִיָּא הָאֱלֹהִים. In cii. 28, and Deut. xxxii. 39, to which Hupfeld (1st ed.) refers, the construction is different, הוּא being there the predicate. Calvin renders, "Tu ipse rex meus," and remarks: "Hoc valet (meo iudicio) demonstrativum הוּא; ac si Propheta longam beneficiorum Dei seriem in prima redemptione contexeret; ut appareat, Deum qui semel redemptor fuerat populi sui non dissimilem fuisse erga posteros. Nisi forte emphatice positum sit asserendi causa, ut omnibus aliis exclusis et valere jussis Deum unum salutis suae praesidem celebrent."

<sup>b</sup> הַיֵּלֶל with בְּ, of the object, as elsewhere, Hithp., "to make one's boast of a thing." Cf. the noun הַתְּהִלָּה with בְּ, in like manner, lxxi. 6. In lvi. 5, 11, the construction is different.

<sup>c</sup> אֲנִי, a particle which may be used not only in advancing from a minor to a major proposition, but also to introduce a contrast, as lviii. 3; lxviii. 17; Job xiv. 3. Comp. Ewald, § 341 b.

<sup>d</sup> כִּי, Rosenm. renders *quando*. Delitzsch *und doch*, but explains that he does this merely for the sake of perspicuity, and that he considers it = *quod*. Hupfeld also rejects the meaning *when*, and says: "The particle introduces the reason of what goes before; the fact on which the reproach rests, *weil* or *dass* (in Greek γάρ), [it would have been better to say ὅτι,] as Gen. xx. 9, 10, 'In what have I sinned, that,' etc., 'What hast thou seen that,' etc., and xxi. 7; xxxi. 15; xl. 15; Ex. iii. 11 ('Who am I that,' etc., as Num. xvi. 11, etc.); Num. xi. 12, 13; Isa. vii. 13; xxxvii. 19, 20." Many of these and other passages are also given by Gesen., *Thesaur.* p. 679. But not to mention that it is not an indifferent matter whether כִּי here means "because" (*weil*), or "that" (*dass*), — for in the former case it would be implied that the chastisement had *not led to* apostasy; in the latter, that the chastisement was *not on account of* apostasy, — I cannot satisfy myself that the passages quoted are strictly parallel, the form of the sentence being in nearly every instance inter-

rogative (except in Hos. i. 6, quoted by Gesen., "I will no more have compassion on the house of Israel *that* I should forgive them," and Gen. xl. 15), and **אִם** in every instance depending *immediately* on the interrogative, or a verb in the primary clause. [In Isa. xxxvii. 19, 20, the construction is quite different]. However, Gen. xl. 15, "Neither have I done anything *that* they should," etc. is a sufficiently near parallel to justify the rendering *that* here. Otherwise we might retain the usual signification of *for*, and regard verse 19 as conveying a further reason for the complaint made. It will then belong to those cases respecting which Gesen. remarks (loc. cit.): "Nonnunquam vis causalis particulæ non statim in oculos incurrit, sententiarum tamen nexu accuratius perpenso revera in ea inest." See Ex. xiii. 17, where (and in two other passages, xlix. 19; cxvi. 10) Gesen. wrongly gives the meaning *etsi*.

## PSALM XLV.

THIS Psalm is evidently a marriage-song, composed for some day of royal espousals. It celebrates the nuptials of a Jewish king with a princess, apparently of foreign extraction; but in honor of what particular king it was written is matter of conjecture. The older, and perhaps the more common interpretation, refers it to Solomon's nuptials with the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Hupfeld thinks that the princess here celebrated was not an Egyptian, but a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre; and accordingly, in verse 12 [13], he renders the words, "daughter of Tyre," in the vocative, as if the poet were there addressing the new queen. The history (1 Kings xi. 1, etc.), he observes, mentions Zidonian (= Tyrian, Isa. xxiii. 12) princesses among Solomon's foreign wives. Hitzig refers the Psalm to the marriage of Ahab with Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, "king of the Zidonians" (1 Kings xvi. 31), and see an allusion to Ahab's ivory house (1 Kings xxii. 39) in verse 8 [9]. Delitzsch thinks Joram, "the son of Jehoshaphat, the second Solomon of the Jewish history," is the king mentioned in the Psalm, and Athaliah the queen. This accounts he says, for the use of the word **שֶׁגַל** (*shégal*), as applied to the queen-consort, which occurs elsewhere as a Chaldee (Dan. v. 2) or Persian (Neh. ii. 6) title; and which would be more of a North Palestine than a Jewish word. For Athaliah was of Tyrian origin, and of the royal family of Israel. Hence the peculiar significance of the exhortation to forget "her



father's house"; and hence, too, the homage demanded specially of Tyre. Moreover, Jehoshaphat seems to have had something of Solomon's passion for foreign trade (though he was unsuccessful in it), which explains, according to Delitzsch, the allusions to gold and ivory; or perhaps the "ivory palaces" may refer to the "ivory house" of Ahab, who was Athaliah's father (1 Kings xxii. 39, comp. Amos iii. 15). Finally, some commentators have supposed the Psalm to have been written in honor of a Persian king's bridal, because of the Persian title given to the queen, because the Tyrians bring tribute, and because the "princes in all lands" (verse 16 [17]) applies best to Persian satraps. But these reasons are of no weight at all, as may be gathered from what has been already observed; and, on the face of it, it is extremely improbable that such an ode as this should have been inspired by the harem of a Persian monarch.

On the whole, the general character of the Psalm, describing, as it does, the majesty and persuasive eloquence of the king, the splendor of his appearance and of his palace, and the hopes which he raised for the future, is such as to make it more justly applicable to Solomon than to any other of the Jewish monarchs, so far as we are acquainted with their fortunes. Nor is it necessarily an objection to this view, that the monarch in the Psalm is spoken of as a warrior, whilst Solomon was peculiarly "a man of peace." Something must be allowed to poetry. An extended dominion would naturally be associated with ideas of conquest. And, with the recollection of the father's exploits fresh in his mind, the poet could not but regard warlike virtues as essential to the glory of the son. Besides, Solomon himself does not seem to have been deficient in military spirit. Either in person or by his captains he carried his arms far to the east, and conquered the district Hamath Zobah, lying near the Euphrates. He took pains to strengthen the fortifications of various towns in his dominions, as well as the "Millo," or citadel of Jerusalem, and added largely to the army which he already possessed, by the introduction of a new kind of force, consisting of chariots and horses, and amounting, we are told, to fourteen hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. Why should not the poet say, addressing such a king, "Gird thee with the sword upon thy thigh—in thy majesty ride forth and prosper"?

But "a greater than Solomon is here." Evident as it is that much of the language of the poem is only properly applicable to the circumstances of the royal nuptials which occasioned it, it is no less evident that much of it greatly transcends them. The outward glory of Solomon was but a type and a foreshadowing of a better glory to be revealed.

Israel's true king was not David or Solomon, but One of whom they, at the best, were only faint and transient images. A righteous One was yet to come who should indeed rule in truth and equity, who should fulfil all the hopes which one human monarch after another, however fair the promise of his reign, had disappointed, and whose kingdom, because it was a righteous kingdom, should endure forever. Such a ruler would indeed be the vicegerent of God. In such an one, and by such an one, God would reign. He would be of the seed of David, and yet more glorious than all his fellows; human, and yet above men. It was because of this wonderfully close and real relation between God and man—a relation which the true king would visibly symbolize—that the Psalmist could address him as God. In him God and man would, in some mysterious manner, meet. This perhaps he did see; more than this he could not see. The mystery of the incarnation was not yet revealed. But David knew that God had made man to be but little short of divine (viii. 5 [6]); and he and others, full of hopes, the very greatness of which made them indistinct, uttered them in words that went far beyond themselves.

The mistake so commonly made in interpreting this Psalm and the Song of Solomon, is to suppose that we have in them *allegories*, every part of which is to find its appropriate spiritual interpretation. The earthly fact has, *as a whole*, its spiritual counterpart. For Christ speaks of himself as "the bridegroom," and of the church as his "bride," and of the kingdom of God under the figure of a marriage-feast. (Matt. xxii. 1, etc.; xxv. and ix. 15. See also Ephes. v. 32; 2 Cor. xi. 2, and Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 2). The same figure also occurs in the Old Testament. God speaks of himself as the bridegroom of the Jewish *people* (Isa. liv. 5; lxii. 5; Jer. iii. 1; Ezek. xvi. 8; Hos. i., ii.), though never, observe, of an *individual*, as the mystics are wont to speak. But this Psalm is not an *allegory*. It is the actual celebration of a circumstance in Jewish history, and derives its higher meaning from the fact, that all Jewish history is typical.

The Messianic interpretation of the Psalm is the most ancient. The Chaldee paraphrast on verse 2 [3] writes: "Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than that of the sons of men." And even the later Jews take the same view. Aben-Ezra says: "This Psalm treats of David, or rather of his son Messiah, for that is his name, Ezek. xxxiv. 24, 'And David my servant shall be their prince forever.'"

In the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 8, 9) the writer rests upon this Psalm, among others, his argument for the divine nature of Christ.

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions, and a brief conclusion in the shape of auguries for the future.

I. The praise of the royal bridegroom. His more than human beauty, his persuasive eloquence, his might and prowess in war, his divine majesty, and the righteousness of his sway, are extolled (ver. 1-9).

II. The description of the royal bride, his gold-inwoven garments, the virgins who follow in her train, the music and songs of the bridal procession (ver. 10-15).

III. Anticipations and hopes expressed for the children by the marriage, who shall perpetuate the dynasty of the monarch, so that his name shall be famous forever (ver. 16, 17).

[For the Precentor. "On the Lilies."<sup>a</sup> Of the Sons of Korah. A Maskil. A Song of Love.]

- 1 MY heart is overflowing with a goodly matter ;  
     I speak ; my work <sup>b</sup> is for a king :  
 My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.  
 2 Fair, fair <sup>c</sup> art thou beyond the children of men ;  
     Grace is shed upon thy lips :  
 Therefore <sup>d</sup> hath God blessed thee forever.

1. This verse is a kind of preface of a very unusual kind in Hebrew poetry, in which the singer tells how great is his subject, and how full his heart is of it.

IS OVERFLOWING ; lit. boils or bubbles up (the word only occurs here, though the noun formed from it occurs Lev. ii. 7 ; vii. 9), his heart being stirred within him by the greatness of his subject (Symm. *ἐκινήθη ἡ καρδία μου*). The metaphor may be taken either from boiling water, or from a fountain bubbling up from its source. (Cf. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 435.) And that which inspires him is A GOODLY MATTER (*ein feines Lied*, Luther), a subject worthy of his highest efforts (cf. Isa. lii. 7 ; Zech. i. 13).

I SPEAK ; sc. it is thus that I begin. MY WORK, i.e. my poem (Theod. *ποίημα*), the work or creation of my imagination, is for a king, is dedicated to and inspired by him.

FOR A KING. I see no reason to supply the article which is wanting in the Hebrew, though interpreters, ancient and modern, with one consent render,

"the king." The absence of the article only makes it more emphatic. It is a king—not a meaner person—who is the object of my song. Comp. *ἐν νίφ*, Heb. i. 1.

2. The *beauty* of the monarch first calls forth the poet's praise (cf. Isa. xxxiii. 17), and then his *persuasive* eloquence (Eccl. x. 12). Cf. Cic. *Clar. Orat.* lix. 15, "*suadela[m] sessitasse in labris ejus*." Calvin observes, it were more kingly for kings to win their subjects' hearts by gracious words, than to rule them by brute force. So, too, of the Great Antitype, the true King, we read that men wondered at the gracious words (the *λόγοι τῆς χάριτος*, Luke iv. 22) that proceeded out of his lips ; for the Lord had given him the tongue of the learned, that he might know how to speak a word in season to them that were weary (Isa. l. 4).

THEREFORE, i.e. beholding this beauty and this grace, do I conclude that God hath blessed thee forever. Such gifts are the proof of God's good-will towards thee.

- 3 Gird thy sword upon (the) thigh, O mighty one,  
Thy glory and thy majesty.
- 4 Yea (in) thy majesty ride on prosperously  
On behalf<sup>e</sup> of truth and righteous meekness;<sup>f</sup>  
And let thy right hand teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows are sharp; — peoples fall under thee;  
(They are sharp) in the heart of the king's enemies.
- 6 Thy throne, O God,<sup>g</sup> is forever and ever;  
A sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

3. But the king is not only fair to look at, and gracious of speech, but he is mighty in battle. The nations shall fall under him. Nevertheless, "in righteousness doth he make war," to uphold truth, and to avenge the oppressed. Instead, however, of directly celebrating his prowess, the singer calls on the king to go forth to battle, and predicts his victory.

THY GLORY AND THY MAJESTY; a second accusative, not in apposition with "thy sword," but dependent on the verb "gird on," in the first clause.

4. YEA IN THY MAJESTY; repeated apparently for the sake of emphasis. Hupfeld would reject the words as a useless repetition.

RIDE ON PROSPEROUSLY; lit. "make thy way, ride on," the first verb being used adverbially, to add force to the other (Gesen. § 142, Obs. 1), "make thy way," i.e. either lit. "pass through" the ranks of the enemy, and overcome all obstacles, or metaph. "be successful"; RIDE, either in the war-chariot (1 Kings xxii.), or on the war-horse, as in the Apocalyptic vision (xix. 11).

ON BEHALF OF, i.e. in order to assert and uphold, etc.; so the LXX, ἐνεκεν ἀληθείας; Luther, *der Wahrheit zu gut*. This is the very loftiest conception of kingly might. The wars which such a king wages are not to acquire territory or renown.

6. THY THRONE, O GOD. I have retained the vocative, which is the rendering of all the ancient versions; and so the passage is quoted in Heb. i. 8. This

rendering seems, indeed, at first sight to be at variance with the first and historical application of the Psalm. Can Solomon, or any Jewish king, be thus directly addressed as God? We find the title given to rulers, kings, or judges, (lxxxii. 6, 7), "I said, ye are *gods*" (see our Lord's comment, John x. 35); Ex. xxi. 6. Calvin, indeed, objects that *Elohim* is only thus used when more than one person is meant, or with some restriction, as when Moses is said to be made a god (*Elohim*) unto Pharaoh (Ex. vii. 1). But the word is evidently used of one person in 1 Sam. xxviii. 13, as is plain from Saul's question, "What form is *he* of?" though our version renders, "I saw *gods* ascending." Calvin, however, admits the first application to Solomon, only observing, that "though he is called *god*, because God hath stamped some mark of his glory upon kings, yet so high a title must go beyond any mere man." It is one of the indications, as he rightly remarks, that the poet is thinking of a greater King, and a more illustrious kingdom ("canticum hoc altius quam ad umbratile regnum spectare"). The difficulty is to understand how far the writer himself saw the purport of his own words. That they have a meaning which is only fully realized in Christ, and that God designed this fulfilment, I unhesitatingly admit. But, on the other hand, it is impossible to suppose that the mystery of the incarnation was distinctly revealed, and clearly understood, under the Old Testament dispensation. God does not thus make haste with men. I



- 7 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness,  
Therefore God, (even) thy God, hath anointed thee  
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
- 8 Myrrh and aloes (and) cassia are all thy garments ;  
Out of ivory palaces music<sup>h</sup> hath made thee glad.
- 9 Kings' daughters are among thy beloved,<sup>i</sup>  
The queen-consort stands at thy right hand in gold of  
Ophir.

conclude, therefore, that in the use of such language the Psalmist was carried beyond himself, and that he was led to employ it by a twofold conviction in his mind, the conviction that God was the King of Israel, combined with the conviction that the Messiah, the true King, who was to be in reality what others were but in figure, was the son of David. In this sense I subscribe to Calvin's statement: "Itaque non dubium est quin Divina Christi majestas hic notetur." Again he beautifully observes: "Jam vero notare operae pretium est, sermonem hic de Christo haberi quatenus Deus est manifestatus in carne. Etsi enim Deus vocatur, quia Sermo est a Patre genitus ante secula, hic tamen statuitur in persona Mediatoris; unde et paulo post Deo subicitur. Et certe si ad Divinam ejus naturam restringas quod dicitur de aeterno ejus regno, peribit nobis inestimabilis fructus quem ex hac doctrina percipimus: dum intelligimus quatenus caput est Ecclesiae, et salutis nostrae custos ac praeses, non regnare ad tempus, sed aeterno imperio potiri, quia hinc nobis solida tam in vita quam in morte securitas. Clare etiam ex proximo contextu patet, Christum nobis Mediatorem proponi, quia unctus a Deo suo proponitur, et quidem prae sociis. Id autem in aeternum Dei Sermonem non competit sed in Christum carne indutum, in qua et servus Dei est, et frater noster."

A SCEPTRE OF UPRIGHTNESS, and in the next verse, "Thou hast loved righteousness." Not only is righteousness the kingliest of all virtues, but it is the necessary basis of a throne and a kingdom which are to endure forever.

7. But this divine king is nevertheless a distinct person from God himself. GOD, EVEN THY GOD, peculiar to this book of the Psalms, instead of "*Jehovah* thy God." See xliii. 4; i. 7; lxvii. 6 [7]. It is contrary to all usage to render the first noun as a vocative, "O God, thy God hath," etc.

WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS. Scarcely therefore is this the act of coronation, the anointing to his office (cf. lxxxix. 20 [21] with Acts x. 38); but rather the meaning is, that this king is, as it were, the very personification of gladness, beyond all the kings upon earth.

FELLOWS may either mean "other kings," or the friends who escorted him at his marriage, *παρανύμφιοι*.

The song of loves here reaches its culminating point in the description of the king. It has portrayed the king as man, as warrior, as godlike ruler; now it pictures him as bridegroom on the day of his espousals. (Compare with this the vision of the Apocalypse, where the "King of kings" goes forth to war, followed by the armies in heaven, after which there follows "the marriage of the Lamb," Rev. xix. 7, etc.)

MYRRH AND ALOES (AND) CASSIA. (Cf. Prov. vii. 17.) The royal garments are so filled with perfumes, that they seem to be nothing but perfumes. And the marriage procession is accompanied by music. (See Critical Note).

9. KINGS' DAUGHTERS; other wives and concubines of the monarch. Such, as Calvin observes, is the evident meaning of the words, although, as polygamy had only the permission, not the sanction, of God, it may seem strange that this

10 Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thine ear :

Forget also thine own people and thy father's house,

11 That the king may desire<sup>k</sup> thy beauty,

For he is thy lord, and do thou bow thyself before him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre (shall come) with a gift :

The rich among the people shall seek thy favor.

should be mentioned as a feature in the splendor of the monarch. But polygamy was practised even by the best of kings; and the Psalmist is describing the magnificence of an Oriental court, such as it actually existed before his eyes, not drawing a picture of what ought to be in a perfect state of things. "In summa, quam liberaliter Deus rerum omnium abundantiam in Solomonem effuderit, hic narratur. Quod autem sibi coacervavit multas uxores, nec frugalem modum in splendore adhibuit, hoc est quasi accidentale." — Calvin.

THE QUEEN-CONSORT (*shêgāl*), the distinguishing title of the newly-married princess; a word occurring, except here, only in the later books.

AT THY RIGHT HAND, as the place of honor; so Bathsheba, as queen-mother, sits at the right hand of Solomon (1 Kings ii. 19).

10. The sacred poet now turns to address the bride. He bids her forget her father's house, and devote herself in reverent affection to her new lord, promising her at the same time that rich gifts shall be poured out at her feet.

O DAUGHTER (like "my son," in the Book of Proverbs), a common Oriental style of address, when the person who employed it, either from age or authority, or as divinely commissioned, had a right to give instruction, such as a father might give to his child.

11. THY LORD. Cf. Gen. xviii. 12.

12. Maurer has, I believe, rightly explained the construction, when he says, that the two clauses of this verse must each have a word supplied from the other. He renders "*Et Tyrii muneribus adulantur tibi; Tibi adulantur muneribus ditissimi quique populi.*"

The "seek thy favor" of the second

clause must be supplied with the first; the "with a gift" with the second. The "daughter of Tyre" is then a mere personification of the people of Tyre, according to the well-known Hebrew idiom, "daughter of Zion," etc. According to this explanation, there is no force in Hupfeld's objection, that, as a personification, it cannot be construed with a plural; for the verb may be supplied in the singular in the first clause, though it stands in the plural in the second. He further objects that Tyre was never subject to the Israelites. But gifts might be brought by nations that were not tributary, as Hiram gave large presents to Solomon. The Tyrians are mentioned only as one nation among many. Hupfeld himself (following Jerome, *et o filia fortissimi*) renders, "And, O daughter of Tyre," the princess herself being a Tyrian, and, as a king's daughter, a representative, as it were, of the people, so that she might be termed a *daughter* of her people. And Maurer admits the possibility of this rendering: "*Et o filia Tyri, Muneribus adulantur tibi ditiores populi (Judaici), te Tyriam, virginem peregrinam, quam ad nos adduxit rex, oblati muneribus venerantur ditissimi quique novae quam nacta es patriae.*" The strongest objection to this view lies, I think, in the conjunction "and" prefixed, which is never prefixed to a vocative, except to join it to a vocative preceding. Riehlm refers to vi. 4 as an instance to the contrary, but there the conjunction is prefixed to the pronoun, and the sentence is elliptical.

THE RICH AMONG THE PEOPLE, or perhaps, "the richest of the people"; so in the same construction (Isa. xxix. 19), "the poorest of men."

SEEK THY FAVOR; lit. smooth, or

- 13 All glorious<sup>1</sup> is the king's daughter in the inner palace,  
Of thread of gold is her clothing.
- 14 On tapestry of divers colors<sup>m</sup> is she conducted unto the king:  
The virgins in her train, (that be) her companions,  
Are brought unto thee.
- 15 They are conducted with great joy and exultation;  
They enter into the king's palace.
- 16 Instead of thy fathers, shall be thy children,  
Whom thou shalt set as princes in all the earth.
- 17 Let me (then) make thy name known through all generations;  
Therefore shall the peoples give thee thanks<sup>n</sup> forever  
and ever.

stroke, thy face (*demulcere faciem*, Gesen.), Job xi. 19; Prov. xix. 6, and used often of imploring the favor of God.

13. A description of the magnificent appearance presented by the queen, as she stands, or perhaps sits, beside the king on the throne, arrayed in her royal and bridal apparel *in the inner apartments of the palace* — the presence-chamber where the throne was placed. Her arrival there is anticipated in this verse, as the bridal procession is subsequently described; unless, as Maurer suggests, this was not the king's palace, but some other, where the bride was first lodged, and whence she was conducted to the king.

IN THE INNER PALACE (not "within," as E. V.; whence have come the common interpretations, that the bride, the church, must be pure within), ἐν τοῖς ἐνωπίοις, the further wall of the house, which was over against the principal entrance, and where the throne stood.

14, 15. The bridal procession described. The bride walks, in Oriental fashion, on the richly woven carpets spread for her feet, accompanied by her maidens, and a festive band with music, dancing, etc.

15. GREAT JOY; lit. "joys," the plural denoting fulness and manifoldness; see on lxviii. 35.

16. After having thus dwelt on the personal graces of the royal pair, the

magnificence of their attire, and the splendor of their retinue, the poet again addresses the king, and concludes with congratulations and hopes expressed as to the issue of the marriage. The monarch cannot trace his descent from a long line of kings, but his children shall be better to him than royal ancestry. They shall be made princes in all the earth — or, perhaps, in all the *land*. Comp. Solomon's princes, 1 Kings iv. 2, and Rehoboam's sons, 2 Chron. xi. 23.

This verse and those immediately preceding are, to my mind, evidence sufficient that this Psalm cannot, as a whole, be regarded as prophetic of the Messiah. It is only by doing violence to language that the spiritual sense is extracted; and it seems to me far wiser to acknowledge at once the mixed character of such Psalms as this. It does speak, no doubt, of One who is higher than the kings of earth, but it does so under earthly images. It is typical, partially, yet not altogether. ("Necesse non est singula membra curiose ad Christum aptari." — *Calvin*.) The sacred poet sees the earthly king and the human marriage before his eyes; but, whilst he strikes his harp to celebrate these, a vision of a higher glory streams in upon him. Thus the earthly and the heavenly mingle. The divine penetrates, hallows, goes beyond the human; but the human is there. See farther in introduction and notes to Ps. cx.

<sup>a</sup> *On lilies.* See the same inscription Psalms lxix. and lxxx., and a similar one Psalm lx. Some suppose an instrument shaped like a lily to be meant (but *not* one of six strings, as if derived from לִשָּׁ, which grammar forbids); others take עַל in the usual sense, “after the manner of,” and suppose the reference to be to the measure according to which the Psalm was to be sung. Others again, metaphorically, “concerning her who is like the lilies,” connecting it with the rest of the title, “a song of loves,” or “of sweet, delightful things.” Aq. (more abstract), ἄσμα προσφιλίας, with which the μέλος προσφιλές of Theocritus has been compared. On Maskil, see xxxii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> אֲמַר אֲנִי. It is doubtful whether this should be taken with what follows, or as an independent clause. The older versions all render, “I am speaking my works,” etc. LXX, λέγω τὰ ἔργα μου τῷ βασιλεῖ; Theod., ἐξαγγελῶ τὰ ποιήματά μου. But the accents separate the clauses, “I am speaking; — my work is (or, may it be) for,” etc. מִנְשִׁי is sing., not plur., the inflexion being that of a word with 3 rad. ה (or י). See Gesen. § 93, Rem. 9.

<sup>c</sup> רִפְּיָה. A passive, by reduplication of the first two radicals (of רִפָּה, ground form (רִפִּי), of which there is no other instance; formed according to Ewald, § 131 g., from an act. רִפִּיָּה, Pealal (Gesen. § 55, 3). Hupfeld, however, thinks that, according to the analogy of רִפְּיָה (or as some mss. רִפִּיָּה adj. dimin.), Jer. xlvi. 20, and such forms as סִחֲרִיָּה, xxxviii. 11; חֲמִיָּה, Lam. i. 20; we ought to punctuate רִפִּיָּה; but he objects that, as these are diminutives, such a form would not be applicable here. Hence, as the ancient versions have two words, — LXX, ὥραϊος κάλλι; Aq., κάλλι ἐκαλλιώθη; Symm., κάλλι καλὸς εἶ; Jerome, *decore pulchrior es*, — he thinks the original reading may have been רִפִּי or רִפָּה, before רִפִּיָּה, but prefers reading simply רִפִּיָּה. As regards the versions, they may have merely endeavored thus to express by periphrasis the reduplicated form. And as regards the diminutive, Gesen. observes that this is employed in all languages to express affection or praise, and instances the Spanish *bonito, bonitino* (*Thesaur.* p. 612).

<sup>d</sup> עַל־כֵּן, “therefore,” it never means anything else; though it has been usual to take it here as standing for עַל־כֵּן אֲשֶׁר, “because”; the sense, apparently, requiring this rendering. It may, however, be explained as in the note — “therefore,” i.e. because one good gift of God draws another after it.

<sup>e</sup> עַל־דָּבָר; because רָכַב, “ride,” does not occur elsewhere absolutely, some join it with עַל־דָּבָר, and render (with the Syr. and Jos. Kimchi), “ride upon the word of truth,” etc., the truth itself being compared to



the horse or chariot. And Calvin remarks: "Aptissime has virtutes vehiculis comparat, quae Regem in sublime attollant." Hupfeld, adhering to the more usual meaning of עַל הַדָּבָר, "because of," regards "the truth" and "meekness," etc. as the attributes of the monarch himself; "because of thy truth," etc.

<sup>f</sup> עֲנִיָּה צָדִיקָא. How are we to account for the juxtaposition of these two words without a copula? Perhaps it is an asyndeton, such as occurs below, verse 9, "myrrh and aloes (and) cassia." But עֲנִיָּה seems to be a sort of middle form between the abs. עֲנִיָּה and constr. עֲנִיָּה so that instead of the first noun being in constr., it is in very close apposition with the other, "a meekness which is also righteousness."

<sup>g</sup> אֱלֹהִים. But few modern interpreters take this word as a vocative. They explain either (1) Thy throne of God, i.e. thy throne divine — as Solomon's throne is called the throne of Jehovah, 1 Chron. xxix 23, cf. xxviii. 5 — thy throne which God has given thee, and which he evermore protects, is, or stands fast, forever (cf. 2 Sam. vii. ; Ps. lxxxix). The pron. suff. with the noun in constr. is defended by such examples as מְחַסֵּי עוֹ, lxxi. 7; אֲבִירֵי עֹז, 2 Sam. xxii. 18; מְעֻזֵּי חַיִּל, ib. 33; מְדוּ בָר, Lev. vi. 3; הַרְבֵּה זְמַן, Ezek. xvi. 27; מְרַבְּחֵיהֶם וְשׂוֹפָה, Hab. iii. 8. But it is of importance to observe, that in all these instances, the noun with the suffix may be explained as being in *apposition* (not in construction) with the noun following: "my refuge which is strength"; "his garment which is linen," etc.; but it would be absurd to say, "thy throne which is God." The constructions, therefore, are not identical. (2) Thy throne is (a throne) of God (אֱלֹהִים being repeated before אֱלֹהִים, the constr. being as in הָאָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, etc.) So Ewald, who objects to לְעוֹלָם as a predicate; but see Lam. v. 19. (3) "Thy throne is God" (like "God is my rock," etc.), Döderlein; which is also the rendering of the Unitarian version in Heb. i. 8, but which is, to say the least of it, very harsh and unnatural, and very different from the examples which are supposed to justify it. Dr. Pusey (Daniel, pp. 471–474) has discussed the construction here with his usual fulness of learning.

<sup>h</sup> מִנִּי. A difficult word. It has been taken (1) as a repetition of the מִן preceding (in its poetical form) in which case we must render, "out of ivory palaces, whence they gladden thee," (but this is a very harsh construction, inasmuch as the prep. thus stands alone, though it may be paralleled by the repetition of בְּעַל, Isa. lix. 18); or perhaps it is better, with the LXX, to carry on the constr. into the next verse, ἐξ ὧν ἡψφρανάν σε θυγατέρες βασιλέων ἐν τῇ τιμῇ σου. So also the ancient Latin versions published by Thorpe, "Ex quibus te delectaverunt filiae

regum in honore tuo." And Jerome, "quibus laetificaverunt te filiae," etc. Or (2) to mean a district of Armenia (as in Jer. li. 27), "ivory of the land of Minni, or Armenia." So the Chaldee; a rendering to which one would incline, because of its simplicity, if there were any evidence that Armenia was celebrated for its ivory. (Or the Minnaei, a people of Southern Arabia, who, according to Diod. iii. 47, had houses adorned with ivory). Or (3) as an apoc. plur. for מְזִיִּים, "viols," "stringed instruments," cl. 4. But the existence of such an apoc. plur. is disputable (see xxii. 17; 2 Sam. xxii. 44, and comp. the apoc. dual יְרִי, Ezek. xiii. 18). But Maurer suggests that מְזִי may either be = *fides mea*, or = *fidicen*, the singular being in this last case put collectively for the plural.

<sup>i</sup> בְּיָקָרְתֶּיהָ. Both the meaning and the form are subjects of debate. יָקָר means *precious*, *costly*, and so *dear*, *beloved* (Prov. vi. 26, comp. Jer. xxxi. 20); hence, here, "thy beloved ones," i.e. the ladies of the harem. Hengst. renders *deine herrlichen*, i.e. as magnificently appareled. Others "in thy precious things," i.e. arrayed in the ornaments and costly apparel presented her by the king. Or, "*among* thy precious things, or treasures." As regards the form, the reading received is that of Ben-Naphtali, instead of that of Ben-Asher, בְּיָקָרְתֶּיהָ (though the Jews, as a rule, prefer the reading of the latter to that of the former). In Prov. xxx. 17, is the exactly analogous form לִיקָרְתָּה (יָקָרְתָּה, Gen. xlix. 10); similar are וַיִּלְלָה, Jer. xxv. 36; בְּיָהֲרוֹן, Eccl. ii. 13, where the orthography of Ben-Naphtali is also followed. In this case the Dagesh is merely euphonic. Saadia, Rashi, and others, however, derive the word, not from יָקָר, but from בָּקָר, making the י merely a *mater lectionis*, after the analogy of מְשִׁפָּחָה, Isa. xlii. 24. See the whole question fully discussed in Hupfeld's note, and comp. Ewald, § 53 c, and Luzzatto, *Gramm. della Lingua Ebraica*, § 193.

<sup>k</sup> וְיִתְּאָר. Fut. apoc., here introducing the apodosis, as the foregoing clause with the verb in the *imperative* may be considered as equivalent to a *conditional* clause, "If thou forget, etc. then, so, will the king," etc.

<sup>l</sup> כָּל-קְבוֹרָה, lit. "all-glory," "nothing but glory." Comp. כָּל-קְבוֹר, Isa. iv. 5; and Ps. xxxix. 6, כָּל-הַבֶּל, "nothing but a breath." The form is by incorrect orthography for קְבֻקְבָּה (arising from the later fluctuation between lengthening the vowel, and doubling the consonant), either adj., as Ezek. xxiii. 41, or subst., as Judges xviii. 21. Here the last, because it is joined with כָּל. — Hupfeld.

<sup>m</sup> לְרִקְמֹת. Most understand this of "variegated or embroidered garments" (Judges v. 30; Ezek. xvi. 18; xxvi. 16; in the last passage spoken of the robes of princes). But I think Maurer is right in render-

ing *In stragulis versicoloribus*. He observes that the dress of the bride has already been mentioned twice, ver. 9 [10], and 13 [14]; and that the prep. **ב** is not used of motion to a place, but of rest in a place. It is used of walking *on* or *over*, IIab. i. 6. The very instances which Hupfeld quotes in support of the other interpretation **בַּבְּרֵךְ**, **בַּחֵץ**, are most decidedly in favor of Maurer's rendering. I would compare Aesch. *Agam.* 881–883:

δμωαί, τί μέλλεθ', αἷς ἐπέσταλται τέλος  
πέδον κελεύθου στρωννύναι πετάσμασιν;  
εὐθὺς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος.

and 896:

ἐν ποικίλοις . . . . κάλλεσιν  
βαίνειν.

**הַיְיָ הַיְיָ**, the fuller form for **הַיְיָ**; see on lxxxi. 5 [6] and cxvi. 6, note <sup>c</sup>.

## PSALM XLVI.

THIS and the two following Psalms are hymns of triumph, composed on the occasion of some great deliverance. I am inclined to think that they all celebrated the same event, the sudden and miraculous destruction of the army of Sennacherib under the walls of Jerusalem. That proud host had swept the land. City after city had fallen into the power of the conqueror. The career of Sennacherib and his captains had been one uninterrupted success. The capital itself alone held out, and even there the enfeebled garrison seemed little likely to make a successful resistance. The swollen river had, in the language of the prophet, overflowed all its channels, and risen even to the neck. It was at this crisis that deliverance came. When there were no succours to be expected, when neither king nor army could help the city, God helped her. He, the Lord of hosts, was in the midst of her, keeping watch over her walls and defending her towers. His angel went forth at dead of night and smote the host of the Assyrians, and when men awoke in the morning, there reigned in that vast camp the silence and the stillness of death. Such a deliverance must have filled the whole nation with wonder and joy. The old days of Moses and David would seem to have returned. The hopes of prophets, so great and so glowing, yet so often apparently defeated,

seemed now nearer to their accomplishment. The times were at hand when Jerusalem should be indeed the joy of the whole earth, when all nations should acknowledge Jehovah as their king. Her towers, her palaces, the temple of her God, stood in all their beauty, saved by a miracle from the spoiler's hand. God had made himself known there as a sure refuge, and henceforth his name would be acknowledged in the earth.

We should expect to find such a deliverance celebrated by songs of thanksgiving and triumph. We should expect to find in these songs some indications of the particular events which they were intended to commemorate. Accordingly we do find, especially in this Psalm, and in the forty-eighth, certain expressions which are most natural and most intelligible, on the supposition that they were written at this time. In this Psalm there occur, moreover, very remarkable coincidences, both in thought and expression, with those prophecies of Isaiah which were uttered in prospect of the Assyrian invasion. The prophet had compared the Assyrian army about to come, to a mighty river, the Nile or the Euphrates, overflowing its banks, carrying desolation far and wide, rising till it had submerged all but the most prominent objects. The Psalmist employs a like image when he compares the enemies of his country to an angry sea, its waves roaring, and the mountains trembling at the swelling thereof. Isaiah had described the peace and safety of Jerusalem, weak and defenceless as she seemed to all eyes but the eye of Faith, under the emblem of her own gently-flowing stream of Siloam (viii. 6). The poet also sings the praises of that stream, whose channels make glad the city of God. Thus each has recourse to similar metaphors, and each heightens their effect by contrast. Again the prophet had assured the house of David that it had a better defence than that of chariots and horses; had laughed to scorn the power of the enemy, saying: "Associate yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces . . . take counsel together, and ye shall come to nought . . . for GOD IS WITH US" (*Immanu' El*); and had symbolized the promised deliverance by the birth of the child, *Immanuel*. The ever-recurring thought of the Psalm is, "God is our refuge and defence"; "God is in the midst" of the holy city; Jehovah (God) of Hosts IS WITH US (*Immanu*). The burden alike of prophecy and Psalm is IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US.

Delitzsch (following Hengstenberg) refers this and the two following Psalms to the victory of Jehoshaphat over the allied forces of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, recorded in 2 Chron. xx., but he admits how thoroughly this Psalm is conceived in the spirit, and colored by the language, of Isaiah. He compares it more particularly



with Isa. xxxiii., and remarks that the principal idea of the Psalm appears in Isa. xxxiii. 2 (referring to Isa. xxv. 4, in proof of the similarity of language between the Psalmist and the prophet); that its concluding address resembles Isa. xxxiii. 13, and that the image of the stream in verse 4 of the Psalm is repeated, but in a bolder form, in verse 21 of the same chapter. The "I will be exalted" in verse 10 of the Psalm is to be found in Isa. xxxiii. 10, whilst the hope that war shall cease throughout the world is in harmony with the bright picture of universal peace which the prophet draws (chap. ii.) According to the view of Delitzsch, however, the prophet copies the Psalmist, and "Psalm xlv. is not an echo, but a prelude of Isa. xxxiii."

Luther's noble hymn, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott," is based upon this Psalm.

The Psalm consists of three strophes, the conclusion of each being marked by the *Selah*, and that of the last two by the refrain.

I. In the first God is magnified as the one sure defence at all times. Those with whom God dwells can never fear, whatever perils may threaten (ver. 1-3).

II. The peace of Zion is secured by the abiding presence of God in her; and the discomfiture of all her foes is certain (ver. 4-7).

III. God has manifested but even now his saving might, in the great deliverance which he has wrought. His arm has been made bare, his voice has been heard, he is exalted in the earth (ver. 8-11).

[For the Precentor. Of the Sons of Korah. Upon Alamoth.<sup>a</sup> A Song.]

I. 1 God is unto us a refuge and stronghold,

A help in distress is he very surely found.

2 Therefore do we not fear, though (the) earth should change,<sup>b</sup>

And though (the) mountains be moved into the heart  
of (the) seas;

1-3. First Strophe. The safety and security of the people of God, even when the earth itself and the strong foundations of the earth are shaken. The revolutions and commotions of the political world are here described by images borrowed from the convulsions of the natural world, the earthquake which makes the mountains to tremble, the roaring of the seas, etc. See below, verse 6, where the figure is dropped.

2. THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, etc. The strongest figure that could be employed, the mountains being regarded as the great pillars of the earth. See xviii. 7 [8]; lxxv. 3 [4]; lxxxii. 5; Job ix. 6.

INTO, not "in the heart," as Jerome, *in corde maris*, but as the Vulg., rightly, *transferentur in cor maris*.

HEART OF THE SEAS. So "heart of heaven" (Deut. iv. 11); "heart of the oak" (2 Sam. xviii. 14).

3 Though the waters thereof<sup>c</sup> roar, though they be troubled,  
 Though the mountains quake with the swelling thereof.  
 [Selah.]

II. 4 A stream (there is) whose channels make glad the city  
 of God,

The holy place<sup>d</sup> of the dwellings of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;

God shall help her, when the morning dawns.

6 Nations roared; kingdoms were moved;

He uttered his voice,<sup>e</sup>—the earth melteth.

For the general sentiment of the verse, comp. Horace, *Od.* iii. 3, "Si fractus illabatur orbis, Impavidum ferient ruinae."

3. The first strophe does not close with the refrain, as the second (ver. 7) and the third (ver. 11) do. There is no reason for inferring, with Hupfeld, an error in the text. We must not expect to find the same regularity in these early lyrics that we should in a modern ballad. Besides, there is a sufficient reason for the omission of the refrain here. It may have been purposely omitted, in order to bring into more striking contrast the roaring waves of the troubled sea, and the gentle, peaceful flow of the brook of Siloam, in the next verse. This contrast, as has been said, may have been suggested by the figures employed in the prophecy of Isaiah. Another contrast, the same in spirit, though the image is different, occurs in the same prophet. On the one side, the Assyrian, in the day of his might, is compared to the forest of Lebanon in all the pride of its branching cedars: and on the other, the Saviour of Israel to the slender shoot, springing from the stem of Jesse (*Isa.* x. 33, 34; xi. 1). The division of the chapters here has most unhappily marred the effect of this contrast, which is very striking, and which is conceived in the truest spirit of poetry.

4-7. The peace and tranquillity of the city of God, whilst all is uproar and confusion without her walls.

4. A STREAM. The one never-failing

stream of water with which Jerusalem was supplied, and which, in its gentle, undisturbed, refreshing flow, was an image of the peace and blessing which the holy city enjoyed under the protection of her God. (See Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 181.) The probable allusion to *Isa.* viii. 6 has been already remarked on, and the metaphor may have been borrowed designedly, as Calvin suggests, "that the faithful might learn that, without any aid from the world, the grace of God alone was sufficient for them. . . . Therefore, though the help of God may but trickle to us, as it were, in slender streams, we should enjoy a deeper tranquillity than if all the power of the world were heaped up all at once for our help."

5. SHE SHALL NOT BE MOVED. The antithesis to this follows in the next verse, "Kingdoms were moved."

WHEN THE MORNING DAWNS; lit. "At the turning of the morning," as *Ex.* xiv. 27; *Judges* xix. 26, and the same phrase of the evening (*Gen.* xxiv. 63); not "early," as *E. V.*, Rosenm., and others, nor "every morning," as Calvin, *De Wette*; but in the morning of redemption and triumph, as opposed to the night of disaster and sorrow. See note on xxx. 5 [6].

6. There is a manifest reference to verses 2, 3, though the figure there employed is now dropped, except so far as we are reminded of it by the use of the same verbs, "roared," "were moved," words which are employed in other pas-

7 Jehovah (God of) hosts is with us ;

A high tower unto us is the God of Jacob. [Selah.]

III. 8 Come, behold the deeds of Jehovah,<sup>f</sup>

Who hath done terrible things<sup>g</sup> in the earth ;

9 (Who) stilleth wars to the end of the earth,

Who breaketh (the) bow and cutteth (the) spear in  
sunder,

(And) burneth (the) chariots in the fire.

10 "Cease ye, and know that I am God,

I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted upon  
the earth."

11 Jehovah (God of) hosts is with us ;

A high tower unto us is the God of Jacob. [Selah.]

sages, both of natural and political convulsions.

The absence of any copula in the verse adds much to the force of the description. The preterites are not hypothetical (as Delitzsch explains). Each act of the drama is, so to speak, before the eyes of the poet.

UTTERED HIS VOICE, i.e. in thunder (past tense), on which the melting of the earth (present tense) is described as following immediately (without a copula). The thunder (called also in xxix. "the voice of Jehovah") is the symbol of the divine judgment. Comp. xviii. 13 [14], and especially as explaining this passage, lxxvi. 8 [9].

7. JEHOVAH (GOD OF) HOSTS. The name first occurs in the mouth of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 11), and is applied to God as the Great King whom all created powers, the armies both in heaven and in earth, obey. To this name the Psalmist immediately subjoins another, "the God of Jacob," the covenant God of his people. Thus we are reminded, as Calvin remarks, of the double prop on which our faith rests ; the infinite power whereby he can subdue the universe unto himself, and the fatherly love which he has revealed in his word. Where these two are joined together, our faith may trample on all enemies.

8-11. The application of the general truth of God's presence and help to the particular circumstances of the nation at the present crisis. Hence "Come, behold." Comp. lxxvi. 5.

9. STILLETH. The participle expresses the *continuance* of the action. Who not only does so now, but will do so evermore, till his kingdom of peace shall be set up in all the earth. This hope, however, is not prominent here, as it is in Micah iv. 3 ; Isa. ii. 4, and ix. 5 [4]. "For every greave of the greaved (warrior) in the battle-tumult, and the (soldier's) cloak rolled in blood, shall be for burning, and fuel of fire" (where our version has most unhappily marred the sense, by inserting "but this"), on which follows the reign of peace of the Messiah.

10. CEASE YE. The verb is used absolutely here, as in 1 Sam. xv. 16, but strictly speaking, the expression is elliptical. Lit. "Let your hand sink down," i.e. cease your efforts.

God himself here "utters his voice," as sole Judge and Arbiter of the world. (So the Anglo-Saxon paraphrase supplies "Then God answered and said by the prophet.") What are all the fret and stir of armies, and captains of armies, and kings and kingdoms, in his sight, who is the Ruler and the Judge of all !

<sup>a</sup> עַל-עֲלֵמֹת . See on vi. note <sup>a</sup>. Not as Böttcher, *De Inferis*, p. 192, *ad voces puberes*, "to be sung by tenor voices," but *ad voces puellarum*; as Perret-Gentil, *chant avec voix de femmes*, and Armand de Mestral still more exactly, *en soprano*. In lxviii. 26, maidens playing on the timbrels accompany the ark. They may also, like Miriam, have joined in the singing, and taken their several parts.

<sup>b</sup> בִּהְמִיר . The inf. may here be impers., as xlii. 3 [4]; Gen. xxv. 26; Ex. ix. 16, with a passive idea, "when one changes," being = "when it is changed." אָרֶץ would then be accus., as in the passages quoted in Gen. and Ex.; but perhaps it is better, with Gesen. (§ 133, 2) and Hupfeld, to take אָרֶץ here as the subject in the nominative, "when the earth changes." According to the latter, the Hiph. is here used in a passive sense, instead of the Niph. or Hoph., which are not in use. But the Hiph. may perhaps be explained as expressing a *state* or *condition*, Gesen. § 53, 2.

<sup>c</sup> מִיָּמֵי . The sing. suffix in this word and in בְּנִצְאֵתוֹ can only refer to יָמִים, which is merely a plural of poetic amplification. In the same way cvii. 25, גָּלִי, refers to יָמִים רַבִּים, ver. 23. Comp., as applied to the sea, גֵּאֲזִית, lxxxix. 10. The futures in this verse carry on the construction of the previous verse. This transition from the infin. constr. to the finite verb is very usual. Others take the future as concessive, a new sentence beginning here. So Maurer, *Fremant, aestuent aquae ejus! Contremiscant*, etc. (nihil timebimus, or something of the kind, being supplied). Hupfeld rejects both explanations; and thinks that this verse forms the protasis of a sentence which in the present text stands incomplete; the apodosis he finds in the refrain, which he thinks ought to stand here before the Selah, as in ver. 7, 11. But see on ver. 3.

<sup>d</sup> קָדַשׁ, either with transposed vowel for קָדַשׁ (see the same form as a noun lxxv. 5, and Isa. lvii. 15, and comp. קָדַשׁ, Ex. xv. 16; and so Symm. τὸ ἁγίον τῆς κατασκαρῶσεως), or adj., agreeing with "city of God," i.e. "holy in (or, because of) the dwellings," etc.

<sup>e</sup> נָתַן בְּקוֹלֹ . This constr. of the verb with the prep. occurs also lxviii. 34; Jer. xii. 1. Gesen. explains it as elliptical = *edere* (strepitum, fremitum) *voce*, and compares the similar phrases "to shake the head," and "with the head"; "to gnash the teeth," and "with the teeth" (§ 135, 1, Rem. 3, note). Hupfeld denies any ellipse, and thinks that נָתַן itself means "to sound"; comp. תַּנְּה and תַּנִּים, "jackals," lit. "howlers."

<sup>f</sup> יְהוָה . For this many mss. (32 Kenn., 46 De Rossi) have אֱלֹהִים, which would be more in accordance with the Elohistic character of the Psalm. The variation is as old as the Talmud, Delitzsch observes. Norzi adopts it, and so does Biesenthal in his edition of the Psalter. Comp.



lxvi. 5. Hupfeld's note (1st ed.), by mistake, refers to the preceding verse. He is wrong in saying that the Chald. favors the reading 'א.

שְׁמוּחָה, plur., here only instead of the sing. שְׁמוּחָה, unites the two meanings of "desolation" and "wonder, astonishment" (as the verb also does), either of which is suitable here. The first is that usually adopted. Jerome, *solitudines*, and so Calvin, Rosenm., and others. The second, "astonishing, i.e. terrible things," is preferred by Ewald and Hupfeld, following the LXX (τέρατα) and the Syriac. The Anglo-Saxon also has, "and his *wundru* þe he wyred."

## PSALM XLVII.

A HYMN of triumph, in which the singer calls upon all the nations of the earth to praise Jehovah as their King, and joyfully anticipates the time when they shall all become one body with the people of the God of Abraham. In this sense the Psalm may be called Messianic, a prophecy of the final triumph of God's kingdom upon earth. The older expositors, for the most part, suppose it to have been written, like Psalm xxiv., on the occasion of the removal of the ark to Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi.), and to be a prophecy of the ascension of Christ, and of his kingly rule, as sitting at the right hand of the Father. The Rabbinical interpreters regard the Psalm as Messianic.

By Venema, Hengstenberg, and Delitzsch it has been referred, like the last, to the victory of Jehoshaphat over the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Arabians, 2 Chron. xx. Hengst. relies especially on the fact that the sons of the Korahites are said to have been present with the army on that occasion, verse 19, and supposes this Psalm to be alluded to, verse 26. Ewald thinks it was composed after the Exile, on the return of Jehovah into his temple, and in consequence of the hopes then kindled of the conversion of the nations to the God of Israel. Eichhorn, who connects Psalms xlvi. and xlviii. with the defeat of Sennacherib, considers this Psalm to belong to David's time; it alludes, he thinks, to the final subjugation of the Canaanites, when the Jebusites were driven out of their stronghold, and celebrates the bringing up of the ark to the city of David. He is of opinion, however, that the Psalm was not written by David, but either by a contemporary, or by a later poet, who transferred himself in imagination into those times.

I see no reason, however, why the Psalm should not have been composed, like the forty-sixth and forty-eight, after the defeat of Sennacherib; and Hupfeld is, I think, right in calling it "a lyrical expansion of the idea prominent in xlvi. 10 [11], that Jehovah is high exalted above the nations, and the Great King over all the earth."

We have two strophes, the end of the first being marked by the *Selah*; but the subject of both is in fact the same, the second, verses 5-10, being only a lyrical variation of the first, verses 1-4. The chief difference is, that what is expressed as a wish or hope in the first part (ver. 3, 4), viz. that God would make the nations the inheritance of Israel, is in the second (ver. 8, 9) regarded as already accomplished.

Very probably this Psalm, like the twenty-fourth, was sung in choral antiphonies, one company of Levites beginning with the words, "O clap your hands," etc. (ver. 1, 2), and another answering, "He subdueth," etc. (ver. 3, 4). Then, again, the first company would take up the words, "God is gone up," etc. and would sing verses 5, 6. The anti-choir would respond in verses 7 and 8; and finally both would unite in ver. 9, 10.

[For the Precentor. Of the Sons of Korah. A Psalm.]

- 1 O ALL ye peoples, clap (the) hand;  
O shout unto God with the voice of triumph!
- 2 For Jehovah, Most High, is terrible,  
A great King over all the earth.
- 3 He subdueth peoples under us,  
And nations under our feet!

1, 2. The nations called upon to do homage to Jehovah. Cf. Ps. lxvi. 1.

1. CLAP (THE) HAND . . . SHOUT, as demonstrations of joy, in solemn, festal procession. We have the former at the coronation of a new king (2 Kings xi. 12), and so here the nations are to rejoice before their new Monarch. See also 1 Sam. x. 24, and comp. Num. xxiii. 21, "the shout of a king."

3, 4. There is considerable difficulty in satisfactorily explaining these verses. They seem, at first sight, to refer to the past—to the destruction of the Canaanites, and the establishment of Israel in the promised inheritance. So the LXX,

ὑπέταξε λαοὺς ἡμῖν . . . ἐξελέξατο ἡμῖν τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ; Jerome, *congregavit* (Vulg., *subjecit*) . . . *Elegit*, etc.; Calvin, *ordinavit* . . . *subjecit*. Luther makes the first verb *future*, "Er wird . . . zwingen," and the second *present*, "Er erwählet." Our own version renders both as *future*. Hupfeld translates both as *optatives*, and, in the case of the first verb, this seems required by the form (but see Isa. i. 9). "May he subdue, etc. . . May he choose (them) for us (as) our inheritance, (as) the pride of Jacob," etc. According to this view, "the inheritance" cannot refer to the Holy Land immediately, but to the nations

- 4 He chooseth for us our inheritance,  
The pride of Jacob whom he hath loved ! [Selah.]
- 5 God is gone up with a shout,  
Jehovah with the voice of a trumpet.
- 6 Sing psalms to God, sing psalms ;  
Sing psalms to our King, sing psalms !
- 7 For God (is) King of all the earth ;  
Sing psalms in skilful strains.
- 8 God is King over (the) nations ;  
God sitteth on his holy throne.

who are to be gathered in ; they are to be the heritage of Israel, just as in ii. 8, "I will make the heathen thine inheritance" (the same word as here). There is, however, a difficulty still, even with this explanation. The word "choose" is not the word we should expect. It sounds awkward to say, "May he *choose*," etc. instead of "May he *make* the nations our inheritance." Hence Hupfeld proposes to read **יִרְיֶה**, "May he make wide, enlarge, etc.," but there is no support for such a conjecture, either in mss. or versions. I am inclined therefore, with Ewald, Hengst., and Bunsen, to take both verbs as *presents* (which the previous context seems to require), either as referring to a recent act of God, or (as Delitzsch) to a continued act — "God is ever choosing Israel's inheritance anew, inasmuch as he shows himself to be the true and mighty protector thereof." The *present* may be used, as in civ. 2, where the act of creation is spoken of as present, because its results are present. Comp. Isa. xiv. 1, where Israel's restoration is described as another choosing.

4. THE PRIDE OF JACOB. Apparently the Holy Land is so styled here ; probably also in Amos vi. 8 (where "his palaces," and "the city," stand in the parallelism), and perhaps in viii. 7, though not apparently in Nahum ii. 3. The Holy Land is so called, as the glorious possession wherein Jacob prides himself, because it is the gift of God's love and favor.

5. GOD IS GONE UP. An expression taken from the entry of the ark into the city of David (2 Sam. vi. 15). Here God is said to ascend his royal throne either in heaven, or in Zion, as manifesting and exercising his sovereignty. Comp. lxviii. 18 [19], and ix. 4 [5] ; vii. 6 [7].

WITH A SHOUT (Anglo-Saxon "with winsome song"). See note on verse 1.

6. SING PSALMS. The word means both *to sing* and *to play*. The LXX, rightly, **ψάλατε** ; Hupfeld, *Singet* ; Delitzsch, *Harfnet*.

7. This verse contains the great subject of the Psalm, the reason why all nations are called to unite in this festal joy.

IN SKILFUL STRAINS ; lit. "a skilful song," a song either fine in its structure, or beautiful in its melody. See xxxii. note a. Hupfeld, *ein Lied* (e.g. *eine Lehre*) ; Delitzsch, *Oden* (the ode being, he says, something of a reflective character, between a purely subjective song, and an objective hymn). But these renderings rest upon a mistaken notion as to the meaning of the root. LXX, **συνετῶς** ; Jerome, *erudite*, rightly as regards the sense.

8. IS KING ; lit. "hath become king," has asserted and is exercising his sovereignty. Calvin, "regnum obtinuit," because, as he says, "verbum sub tempore praeterito continuum actum designat" ; and so in the next clause, "hath taken his seat."

- 9 The princes of (the) peoples are gathered together,  
 (To be) a people<sup>a</sup> of the God of Abraham :  
 10 For to God (belong) the shields of the earth ;  
 Very high is he exalted.

9. The prayer is answered, the hope is accomplished. The princes of the nations are gathered together, are come in one body, as it were, on a day of solemn coronation, to do homage as vassals to their liege Lord and King (cii. 22 [23] ; Isa. lxvi. 18, and cf. Isa. xiv. 1).  
 10. SHIELDS OF THE EARTH, i.e. princes as the defenders and champions of their people. See the same figure Hosea iv. 18.

<sup>a</sup> עַם אֶחָד. These words can only be in apposition with the foregoing. The older translators (except Symm. and Chald.) not seeing this, render as if the reading were עַם, instead of עַם אֶחָד. So also Kimchi and Ewald. Others, as Rosenm., understood the prep. אֶל or ל before עַם. De Wette 3, and Hengst. explain the constr. as accus. of direction. But it is much simpler to take it as above, in appos. to נְרִיבֵי ע'.

## PSALM XLVIII.

THIS Psalm, there is every reason to suppose, was composed on the same occasion as the two preceding. It celebrates God's protecting care of Jerusalem, and especially the deliverance of the city from the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 19 ; Isa. xxxvi. etc.), as may be inferred from the many verbal coincidences which present themselves, on a comparison of the Psalm with the prophecies of Isaiah relating to the Assyrian invasion (chaps. viii., xxviii., xxix. 1-7 ; xxxiii.) See the introduction to Psalm xlv.

From verse 9 it may be inferred that the Psalm was intended to be sung in the Temple service. The Rabbinical commentators refer this, like the preceding Psalms, to the times of the Messiah, and the struggle with Gog and Magog, which was to issue in the everlasting glory of Jerusalem.

It consists of three parts or strophes.

I. An introduction which, after an ascription of praise to God, describes the glory (ver. 2) and the security (ver. 3) of Zion, as the city in which God hath made himself known (ver. 1-3.)

II. The defeat of the enemy. Because God thus dwells in Zion, and loves Zion, she has been saved out of the hand of the Assyrian. That mighty host, led by its kingly captains, did but look upon the



city, and were confounded, as in a moment, broken as with the east wind, which breaks the ships of Tarshish, melting away "like snow in the glance of the Lord" (ver. 4-8).

III. Thanksgiving to God, whose praise is not only in Zion, but in all the earth, and whose great deliverance the poet would have remembered in all time to come (ver. 9-14).

[A Song. A Psalm. Of the Sons of Korah.\*]

- 1 GREAT is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised,  
In the city of our God, (in) his holy mountain.
- 2 Beautiful in elevation,<sup>b</sup> a joy of the whole earth,  
Is the mountain of Zion, the sides of the north,  
The city of (the) great King.

1-3. It is because Zion is the city of *God*, that she so far surpasses all other cities in beauty and renown. It is the glory of his presence which makes her glorious; the strength of his presence which makes her safe.

1. GREATLY TO BE PRAISED. See xviii., note<sup>a</sup>. Comp. xcvi. 4; cxlv. 3.

THE CITY OF OUR GOD, as again in verse 8. Comp. xlv. 4 [5].

2. BEAUTIFUL IN ELEVATION, or "rising aloft in beauty." This is precisely one of the most striking features in the topography of Jerusalem. "Its elevation," says Stanley, "is remarkable; occasioned not from its being on the summit of one of the numerous hills of Judaea, like most of the towns and villages, but because it is on the edge of one of the highest table-lands in the country. Hebron, indeed, is higher still, by some hundred feet; and from the south, accordingly, the approach to Jerusalem is by a slight descent. But from every other side the ascent is perpetual; and to the traveller approaching Jerusalem from the west or east it must have always presented the appearance, beyond any other capital of the then known world—we may add, beyond any important city that has ever existed on the earth—of a mountain city; breathing, as compared with the sultry plains of the Jordan or of the coast, a mountain air, enthroned,

as compared with Jericho or Damascus, Gaza or Tyre, on a mountain fastness." — *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 170, 171.

A JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH. Most recent interpreters render, "a joy of the whole *land*," a rendering which I am satisfied does not do justice to the largeness of the sacred poet's conceptions. In a Psalm where the range of anticipation is so wide, and in which God's name is declared to be known to the ends of the earth, we must understand the language employed, in its broadest, not in its narrowest sense. Comp. Lam. ii. 15, "Is not this the city which they called the crown of beauty, a joy of the whole earth?" and Isa. lx. 15, "a joy of many generations."

THE SIDES OF THE NORTH. It is not very clear what is meant by this expression here. In other passages, it denotes "the furthest north," "the extremest regions of the north," as in Ezek. xxxviii. 6, 15; xxxix. 2, where it is used of the land of Gog. In Isa. xiv. 13 (the only place, besides those mentioned, where it occurs), it seems to describe the locality of the Assyrian Olympus, or mount of the gods. Hence Ewald, Hitzig, and Hengstenberg suppose that the Psalmist, borrowing here a figure from the Assyrian mythology, intends to represent Zion as holding the same position in Israel, which Merû or Alborg would

## 3 God in her palaces

Hath made himself known as a high tower.

## 4 For lo! the kings were assembled,

They passed by together :

have amongst the Asiatics, or Olympus amongst the Greeks. Ewald even suggests that in consequence of the Assyrian invasion, the expression may have become familiar to Jewish writers, in the same way as Olympus is to Christian writers. But surely this is a most extravagant supposition. The affectation of embodying a piece of Pagan mythology in a sacred hymn, in order to express a sacred idea, could never have occurred to men animated by such strong religious and patriotic sentiments as the Hebrew poets of old. In Isa. xiv. 13, it must be remembered, the case is widely different, as the expression is there put into the mouth of the king of Assyria himself. But for a Jew to speak of Zion, the holy mountain, as if it were no more than some mountain of heathen fable, would have been nothing short of profanity.

One thing is clear, that by "the sides of the north" is indicated, in some sense or other, the topography of the holy city. The question is, to what particular part of it the words refer? (1) Now Jerusalem itself did not lie on the north, but on the south side of the elevated tableland mentioned in a preceding note. But the *Temple* did lie north, i.e. north-east of the city; and as the Temple was, in a peculiar sense, the dwelling-place of God, the Psalmist may have intended to designate this, when he spoke of "the sides of the north," the expression being sufficiently accurate for the purposes of poetry. Hence we have the holy city regarded from three different points of view; viz. "the Mount Zion" (the city of David), "the sides of the north" (Mount Moriah and the Temple), "the city of the Great King" (Jerusalem proper, comp. Matt. v. 35). (2) If, however, Zion be the peak now levelled on the north of the Temple mount, as Fergusson (*Essay*, p. 55 ff.) and Thrupp (*Ancient*

*Jerusalem*, p. 17 ff.) suppose, "the Mount Zion (on) the sides of the north" may be the true rendering here. And this, too, might peculiarly be called "beautiful for elevation," as it was the highest point of the whole plateau, and that which would most readily strike the eye. (3) Another reason may be suggested why the north should be especially mentioned, because an enemy approaching like the Assyrians, would obtain their first view of the city on that side.

3. HATH MADE HIMSELF KNOWN, especially by the great act of deliverance recently accomplished, a description of which immediately follows.

4. There follows, in a few lines, a striking picture of the advance of the hostile army, and of its sudden destruction. Compare with this the wonderfully graphic description of the same march in Isa. x. 28-34.

THE KINGS. The mention of "kings" in the plural does not prove that the Psalm cannot be referred to the Assyrian invasion. They were perhaps satraps, or petty kings (comp. Judges v. 3, 19), dependent upon Sennacherib. In his annals, as lately deciphered, he speaks of setting up tributary kings or viceroys in Chaldea, Phoenicia, and Philistia, after conquering those countries. Calvin and others, who refer the Psalm to the time of Ahaz, suppose Pekah and Rezin to be meant. Hengstenberg and Delitzsch think that "the kings" are those of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, who united to attack Jehoshaphat, and that it is their discomfiture which is the subject of the Psalm. But the battle at Tekoa would surely not have been described as the deliverance of Jerusalem.

WERE ASSEMBLED. The word is used of a formal confederation, as of the Canaanite kings, Josh. xi. 5.

THEY PASSED BY TOGETHER : spoken

- 5 They, even they, saw (it) ; immediately<sup>c</sup> they were amazed ;  
 They were terrified, they were utterly confounded :  
 6 Trembling seized upon them there,  
 Pangs as upon a woman in travail :  
 7 (They were broken as) with an east wind  
 Which breaketh the ships of Tarshish.  
 8 As we have heard, so have we seen  
 In the city of Jehovah of hosts, in the city of our God ;  
 God will establish it forever. [Selah.]

of the marching of an army in battle array. Comp. Isa. x. 29, etc. But it might also be rendered, "They *perished* at once, or altogether." For this meaning of the verb see xxxvii. 36. If so, this verse expresses in its two clauses, briefly, the gathering and the destruction of the hosts, and then these two ideas are expanded in what follows.

5. THEY, EVEN THEY, SAW (IT); viz. the holy city. I have repeated the pronoun which stands here emphatically at the beginning of the sentence. The force of the description in this verse, as in the last, is much increased by the way in which the verbs follow one another without a copula. Calvin well illustrates it by Caesar's *veni, vidi, vici*. A succession of scenes is thus flashed upon the eye. Each word is a picture. First, we have the mustering of the hosts; then their march; then, their first sight of the city; then their astonishment, their dismay, their wild panic and flight.

WERE UTTERLY CONFOUNDED. So Symm. ἐξεπλόγησαν; LXX, ἐσαλεύθησαν. But it may mean "were driven to flight," as Gesenius and Hupfeld here take it.

6, 7. This confusion and terror are now further portrayed under two images: the first, that of a travailing woman, a common one in the Old Testament, and found also in the New; and the second, in which the defeat of Sennacherib's army is compared to the wreck and dispersion of a navy in a storm. The image in this case is presented with lyric vividness, as if the sacred poet were himself looking on the scene. It is a comparison

without any particle of comparison to introduce it.

But there are two ways of rendering verse 7, according as the verb is second person masculine, or third person feminine; for it may be either. If the first, then God is the subject. "Thou, O God, breakest (them as thou breakest) the ships of Tarshish," etc. So the LXX, συντρίβεις; Symm. κατεῳξεις. So also Calvin, J. H. Michaelis, Hengst., Hupfeld. [And there is a certain lyric force and animation in this sudden apostrophe to God, which might almost incline one to give it the preference.] If the second, then the rendering will be as in the text. So Ewald and DeWette. Ewald renders: "durch des Osten-Sturm der zertrümmert Tarschisch-Schiffe." Diodati's translation gives the sense most exactly: "(Furono rotte come) per lo vento Orientale (che) rompe le navi di Tarsis." And this I have followed.

For the image, as descriptive of the irresistible power of God, compare Isa. xxvii. 8; Amos iv. 9; Jonah iv. 8; Jer. xviii. 17, and see 1 Kings x. 22, where ships of Tarshish denote the strongest and largest ships. Comp. the "afflavit Deus, et dissipantur" of our own history. In Isa. xxxiii. the Assyrian power is also compared to a gallant ship.

8. This marvellous deliverance is but a fresh proof, in our own experience, of that wonder-working love which in the days of old has so often manifested itself in Israel. The things which our fathers have told us, we have now witnessed with our own eyes. (Comp. xlv. 1.) And

- 9 We have thought,<sup>d</sup> O God, of thy loving-kindness  
In the midst of thy temple.
- 10 As is thy name, O God, so is thy praise to the ends of the  
earth!
- Full of righteousness is thy right hand.
- 11 Let the mountain of Zion be glad,  
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice,  
Because of thy judgments.
- 12 Compass Zion, and go round about her ;  
Tell the towers thereof,
- 13 Mark well her bulwarks,<sup>e</sup> consider her palaces,  
That ye may tell it to the generations following,

therefore, also, the present is regarded as a pledge for the future: "God will establish it—make it stand firm—forever," as lxxxvii. 5.

9-14. The next portion of the Psalm consists of the grateful celebration of that which God had done for Zion.

9. WE HAVE THOUGHT, i.e. pondered, considered in that deep, still, heartfelt gratitude, whence issue the loud praises of the tongue. IN THY TEMPLE, either as the place in which the congregation met to acknowledge God's loving-kindness, or as the place in which he had manifested his loving-kindness. Calvin: "Locum ubi invocaretur sedem virtutis et gloriæ suæ fore."

10. AS IS THY NAME, SO IS; or, as others, "So let thy praise be," i.e. mayest thou be praised according to the greatness of thy name, God's name being here that name which he had got himself in Israel, by his manifold mighty acts on their behalf.

11. The verbs may either be taken as optatives, as above, or as simple presents. "The mountain of Zion rejoices," etc. Comp. xcvii. 8.

THE DAUGHTERS OF JUDAH, not here literally "the maidens of Judah," though it was usual for these to take a prominent part in the celebration of every victory, with songs and dances; but, as the parallelism with "the mountain of Zion" would indicate, the various cities and

villages of Judah which had suffered from the invasion. The metaphor is common in prose as well as in poetry.

12. The glad sense of freedom, the shout of deliverance, are no less noticeable in this verse than the strong patriotic feeling which breathes in it.

The horrors of the siege are at an end. No hostile army lies before the walls, and shuts the besieged within the gates. Therefore it is that the sacred poet, kindling with emotion, as he looks with all the pride and all the deep affection of a true patriot on the towers of Zion, which still stand in their beauty, unscathed by the spoiler's hand, calls upon all her inhabitants to go forth, now that they can do so freely, to look upon her beauty, to gaze with affection upon her bulwarks, to consider one by one her palaces.

13. CONSIDER. The word occurs only here; lit. "divide," i.e. mark them one by one, in a poetical and a figurative sense, answering to the "tell her towers" before. Symm., διαμετρήσατε τὰ βασίλεια αὐτῆς. L. de Dieu gives it a more literal turn: "Dividite palatia, h.e. obambulate inter palatia ejus, secundo omnes palatiorum vias, quo omnia positis commode intueri."

Still, in thus calling on them to admire the material glory of their city, the poet would not have them do so only that they may take pride in her strength and her stateliness, but that they may tell to



14 For such is God, our God, forever and ever ;  
He will be our guide unto death.<sup>f</sup>

generations to come who that God is whose hand has saved her.

14. FOR SUCH IS GOD ; or, “ for this is,” etc. Comp. for the same position of the demonstrative, lxviii. 8 [9] ; Ex. xxxii. 1 ; Josh. ix. 12, 13. Or it may be used still less definitely in the sense of “ here ” (like the Greek ὅδε), as civ. 25, 26 ; Isa. xxiii. 13. See note on xxiv. 10.

It is interesting to compare with these words of the Jewish poet a similar burst of patriotic sentiment from the lips of a Grecian orator. Καὶ οἶδε μέν, says Pericles, τοιοῦτε ἐγένοντο· τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς χρὴ ἀσφαλεστέραν μὲν εὐχεσθαι, ἀτομότεραν δὲ μηδὲν ἀξιῶν τὴν ἐς τοὺς πολεμίους διάνοιαν ἔχειν, σκοποῦντας μὴ λόγῳ μόνῳ τὴν ὠφέλειαν . . . ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύναμιν καθ’ ἡμέραν ἔργῳ θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς, κ.τ.λ. It is needless to observe how exactly these last words correspond to those of the Psalmist : “ Mark well her bulwarks,” etc. Indeed, Arnold, in his note on the passage in Thucydides (ii. 43), well observes, that “ the words ἔργῳ θεωμένους might furnish matter for an ora-

tion or a poem.’ They mean, ‘ Look at our temples and the statues which embellish them ; go down to Piræus, observe the long walls, visit the arsenals, and the docks of our three hundred ships ; frequent our theatres, and appreciate the surpassing excellence of our poets, and the taste and splendor of our scenic representations ; walk through the markets, observe them filled with the productions of every part of the world ; and listen to the sound of so many dialects and foreign languages, which strike your ears in the streets of our city, the resort of the whole world.’” But with the strong love of country, with the same enthusiastic admiration of her present grandeur, the same fond recollection of her glory in times past, there is a very striking difference of spirit. The Greek thinks only of the men who achieved that glory, and who embellished the city of their birth, and whose right hand gave them the victory ; the Jew traces all the glory of his land, and all the success of her children, immediately to God. With the one all is of man ; with the other all is of God.

<sup>a</sup> לְבָנֶיךָ א'. See on xlii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> רִפְּחָ נֹף, “ beautiful of elevation,” i.e. a beautiful summit. נֹף occurs only here, and has no doubt been rightly explained by Reland and Schultens, by reference to the Arab. نَوْف, “ height.” See Gesen. *Thesaur.* in v.

<sup>c</sup> כֵּן. There is no need to supply the correlative in the protasis before כֵּן. The word is used here as a particle of time, to denote immediate consequence (like the Greek οὕτως), as in 1 Sam. ix. 13 ; Hos. iv. 7, where, however, כֵּן stands in the protasis.

<sup>d</sup> הִתְבַּיֵּיתִי. The word has been variously rendered. The LXX, ὑπελάβομεν ; Symm., εἰκάσαμεν ; Jerome, *aestimavimus* ; Calvin, *expectavimus*. But the root is apparently cognate with זכח, and signifies the quiet, thoughtful consideration of a thing ; the forming an idea in the mind (cf. l. 21), as in Latin, *sibi informare*. Hence “ we have formed an idea, so to speak, corresponding to the greatness of thy goodness,” as Hupfeld explains.

לחילה<sup>e</sup>. This ought clearly to be לַחֲיִלָּה, with mappik, as in Zech. ix. 4.

<sup>f</sup> על מות. Many mss. (as in ix. 1) read עַל־מוֹת, one word, but in different senses; either (1) עַל־מוֹת, “youth.” So the Chald., “as in the days of youth,” which Luther follows; and this has been explained as = “in youthful strength”; or (2), “in a hidden manner, mysteriously.” Others would defend the present reading, by rendering not “unto death,” which gives but a poor sense, especially in relation to the general tenor of the Psalm, but “beyond death.” So Mendels., Cocc., etc., following the Syr., which has ܠܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ, *desuper vel supra mortem*, and perhaps Aq., ἀθανασία. Stier tries to support this by Psalm xxiii. 6; lxviii. 21, and Isa. xxv. 6–10. But not a single passage has been adduced in which the prep. עַל has this meaning. עַל־מוֹת, however, may be only like ע' מ' לִבֶּן, ix. 1, intended to mark the measure to which the song was to be sung; and then it either stands exceptionally at the end, instead of the beginning of the Psalm, as a similar notation does in Hab. iii. 19; or it belongs to the title of the next Psalm, in which case the conclusion of this Psalm is imperfect.

## PSALM XLIX.

THIS Psalm is not inaptly described in the ancient Latin version of the Psalms (published with the Anglo-Saxon Paraphrase by Thorpe) as, *Vox Ecclesiae super Lazaro et divite purpurato*. It is designed as a vindication of the ways of God in sight of the different fortunes of the righteous and the wicked in this world. It is no mere commonplace on the shortness of life and the uncertainty of riches. It is no philosophical dissertation, which bids us bear up bravely in our perils and sufferings, telling us that virtue is its own reward. It goes at once to the root of the matter. It shows us not only the vanity of riches, but the end of those who “boast themselves in their riches.” It comforts the righteous in their oppression and affliction, not merely by the assurance that they shall finally triumph over the wicked, but by the more glorious hope of life everlasting with God. Here is the true ground of consolation, that God will not only not forsake those who trust in him in this life, but that he will take them to himself. It is this doctrine specially enunciated, which gives the Psalm its dis-

tinctive character, and which leads the Psalmist himself to claim for it so attentive a hearing.

The Psalm consists of three parts.

I. First: An introduction, in which the whole world is called upon to listen to the words of the poet, and in which he further declares that he speaks by divine inspiration (ver. 1-4).

Then follows the main body of the poem, in two principal divisions, marked by the refrain, which closes each (ver. 5-12, and ver. 13-20).

II. The former of these contains, generally, a description of men prosperous and rich, whose riches puff them up with pride, and with the foolish imagination that they can secure for themselves an immortality upon earth; but who are so far from being able to save themselves or others from death by their riches, that they are no better than the beasts that perish (ver. 5-12).

III. The remainder of the Psalm deals chiefly with the consolation to be derived from the end of the righteous, as contrasted with the end of the worldly (ver. 13-20).

Others divide the Psalm differently, and consider verses 5-15 to contain one consecutive piece of instruction as to the several lots of the worldly and the faithful, and verses 16-20, the application of the instruction, by way of consolation, to those who are in suffering and poverty, and to whom the prosperity of these men is a stumbling-block.

It should be remarked, that the rich men of the Psalm are not described as "the wicked," "the ungodly," "the violent," etc. as in other Psalms. Only one hint is given, in the word "iniquity" (ver. 5), that they are evil men. But this seems to be designed, as in our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, to show that the selfish, proud, boastful use of riches, the mere luxuriousness of wealth, apart from violence or unscrupulousness of conduct, is evil, and finds its end in the outer darkness.

[For the Precentor. Of the Sons of Korah.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm.]

1 HEAR ye this, all ye peoples,

Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world,

1-4. Introduction and announcement of the Psalmist's purpose. The opening is solemn and formal, like that of the prophets. Comp. Micah i. 2; 1 Kings xxii. 28, with Deut. xxxii. 1; Isa. i. 2; Ps. l. 1. "Quoniam Psalmus hic, a quocunque fuerit compositus, unum ex

præcipuis coelestis philosophiæ capitibus continet, non abs re tam splendidis verbis auctor præfatur, de rebus magnis et reconditis sibi fore sermonem, quo sibi attentionem conciliet."—*Calvin*.

1. THE WORLD; the term here used is that which indicates its temporary,

- 2 Both low and high,  
 Rich and poor together!
- 3 My mouth shall speak wisdom,  
 And the meditation of my heart (is) understanding;
- 4 I will incline mine ear to a parable,  
 I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
- 5 Why should I fear in the days of evil,  
 (When) iniquity compasseth me about my heels? <sup>b</sup>

fleeting character: see xvii. note <sup>a</sup>. Two things are implied in this verse: first, that the doctrine of the Psalm concerns all; and next, that it is one which men are apt to neglect, and to the consideration of which, therefore, they need to be roused.

2. **LOW AND HIGH**; lit. sons of (common) men, and sons of (great) men, the two names for *man* here used answering very nearly to the distinction between *ἄνθρωπος* and *ἄνθρωπος*, and between *homo* and *vir*. The older versions, however, see no antithesis here, but take the phrase as = "all and every." So Symm., *ἡ τε ἀνθρωπότης, προσέτι δὲ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ ἐκείνου ἀνδρός*. Jerome, *Tam filii Adam quam filii singulorum*. **RICH AND POOR**, between whom the instruction of the Psalm is divided, its lessons being a warning to the one, and a consolation to the other.

3. **WISDOM . . . UNDERSTANDING**. In the Hebrew these words are plural, but apparently not so used with any intensification of meaning. The plural in these and like words is very common in the Proverbs (i. 20; ix. 1; xiv. 1; xxiv. 7). In the second clause of the verse I have supplied the copula "is"; for, notwithstanding Hupfeld's remark to the contrary, I cannot think it a natural construction to repeat the verb from the first clause: "The meditation of my heart shall speak understanding."

4. **I WILL INCLINE MINE EAR**, as one who listens patiently for the divine revelation. The inspiration of the poet, as well as that of the prophet, is from above. He cannot speak of his own heart; he must hear what God the Lord will say. The *inclining* of the ear is the act sig-

nificant of ready obedience on the part of man; the *revealing* or uncovering the ear (as it were, by drawing away the long hair which hung over it) denotes the imparting of supernatural knowledge, heavenly wisdom, and the like, on the part of God (Isa. l. 5). Similarly, Wordsworth, speaking of a maiden whose soul is filled, and whose very features are moulded by the inspiration caught from the world of nature:

"She shall *lean her ear*

In many a secret place,  
 Where rivulets dance their wayward round,

And beauty born of murmuring sound  
 Shall pass into her face."

Diodati supposes that the metaphor is borrowed from musicians, who incline the ear when they tune their instruments, in order to ascertain that each note is true. It is because he has thus listened to receive a message from above, that the poet can call upon all nations to hear him. He who would be a true teacher of the things of God must first incline his ear to hear, before he can open his lips to speak.

A **PARABLE**, a truth cast in a weighty, sententious (and frequently, as here, an antithetical) form; as a **RIDDLE** is one clothed in metaphor, etc. Comp. lxxviii. 2; Prov. i. 6. Both words, however, are used of profound and important truths. The very expression, "I will open," shows that it is not the design of the poet to express himself in a dark, obscure manner.

5. **WHY SHOULD I FEAR**. The consolatory result at which he has arrived, after looking at the world, and weighing



- 6 They that trust<sup>e</sup> in their wealth,  
 And in the greatness of their riches make their boast,  
 7 None (of them) can by any means redeem another,<sup>d</sup>  
 Nor give to God a ransom for him, —  
 8 And too costly is the redemption of their soul,  
 And it must be given up<sup>e</sup> forever, —  
 9 That he should still live continually,  
 (And) not see the grave.  
 10 For<sup>f</sup> he must see (it) :  
 Wise men must die ;  
 Together the fool and the brutish person must perish,  
 And leave their wealth to others.

in the balance those whose fortune seems fair and prosperous, is placed first, before he tells the tale, as in xxxvii. 1 ; lxxiii. 1.

THE DAYS OF EVIL; not merely a time of misfortune, as the parallelism shows, but the time in which evil men bear sway.

(WHEN) INIQUITY, etc.; lit. "when the iniquity of my heels compasseth me about." Comp. xlv. 15 [16], "the shame of my face covereth me," instead of "shame covereth my face." Diodati, correctly: "Quando l'iniquità che m'è alle calcagna m'intornierà." Calvin quotes the French saying, *poursuivre jusque aux talons*, and remarks, "Fateor eum de hostibus loqui, sed iniquas eorum persecutiones calcaneo suo haerere dicit, quia potentia praevalent, et quasi talos pede prementes, imminant ad ipsum premendum." Or, perhaps, iniquity is supposed to be lying, like a serpent in his path, ready to fasten on the heel, as the most exposed and vulnerable part. See more in the Critical Note.

7. ANOTHER; lit. "a brother," the word, however, being employed in the widest sense, as in Lev. xxv. 48, and often. The sentiment is expressed in its most general form, but with a tacit opposition. Man cannot redeem man from death: God only can do this.

8. SOUL, i.e. as is evident from the whole scope of the context here, "life."

It is much to be regretted that superficial readers of the Psalm so often give a totally false meaning to this and the preceding verse. The passage has been alleged to prove that our Lord, as the Redeemer of man, must be God as well as man. The doctrine is most true, but it is not in the Psalm; nor is there the remotest allusion to it. All that is here taught is, that no wealth can save a man from death, because the life of men is not in their own hands, or in that of their fellows, but only in the hand of God, who cannot be bribed. There is a kind of solemn irony in the idea of the richest of men offering all his riches to God, to escape death.

9. THAT HE SHOULD LIVE. This is dependent on the last clause of verse 7, "Nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should live," etc., verse 8 being parenthetical. Others connect it with the last clause of verse 8, and render: "And he must give up (all hope) forever, that he shall live continually," etc. But see note<sup>e</sup>.

10. WISE MEN; not simply meaning that their wisdom cannot save them, but that their utmost wisdom will not lead them to make so profitable a use of their wealth, as thereby to escape the grave. DIE . . . PERISH: the words seem purposely chosen to denote the end respectively of the *wise* and the *brutish*.

- 11 Their inward thought<sup>s</sup> (is that) their houses (shall be)  
forever,  
Their dwelling-places to many generations :  
They have called (their) lands after their own names.<sup>h</sup>
- 12 But man, (being) in honor, abideth not,  
He is like to the beasts (that) are destroyed.
- 13 This their way is their folly,  
And after them men approve their sayings. [Selah.]
- 14 Like sheep they are gathered to the unseen world ;<sup>i</sup>  
Death is their shepherd :  
(And the upright have dominion over them in the morning,)  
And their beauty<sup>k</sup> shall the unseen world consume,  
That it have no more dwelling-place.<sup>l</sup>

11. AFTER THEIR OWN NAMES. Thus hoping to build for themselves an immortality upon earth.

12. IN HONOR. These words belong to the subject "man," not to the verb following. Man (being) in honor, notwithstanding all the magnificence of his position and his wealth, abideth not; lit. does not pass the night.—is not so secure in his position even as a wayfarer, who turns in for a night's lodging at the inn.

ARE DESTROYED; lit. "are reduced to silence," the eternal silence of death. The clause is a relative one. Others, however, refer this verb to "man," as the subject. So Calvin: "Similis factus est jumentis: intereunt." They (i.e. men) perish. But the sudden transition from the singular to the plural is harsh; and, on the other hand, the omission of the relative is common enough. Delitzsch, better, considers both "men" and "beasts" to be the subject of the verb.

13. This verse is evidently closely connected with verse 11, and hence Hupfeld would transpose it with verse 12. It is, as he says, naturally connected by the train of thought with verse 11, and indeed carries on and completes the picture, by showing how these rich men have their example followed even after their death. The very expression, "*This* their way," etc., is a summing up of what had been just said. And the *Selah*,

standing as it now does, at the end of verse 13 [14], instead of standing, as it naturally would, after the refrain, verse 12, seems to intimate that there has been some disarrangement.

THIS THEIR WAY. Both the meaning and the construction of this clause are doubtful. It may mean (1) "This their way (i.e. manner of life, course of conduct) is their folly"; or (2) "This their prosperous condition is (or becomes), their infatuation (blind confidence)"; for *kēsēl* may mean "a stupid security or presumptuous confidence," as well as "folly." As regards the construction, it may be as above, or the clause may consist of two independent sentences: "This is their way; they have confidence"; or finally, the latter part of it may be a relative sentence (as Ewald takes it): "This is the way of those who are foolish."

APPROVE THEIR SAYINGS; lit. "find pleasure in their mouth." Their example and their words survive them. Their maxims are the maxims which find favor and currency in the world. Ewald carries on the construction from the previous verse:

"This is the way of those who have folly,  
And of those after them who delight  
to speak in like manner."

14. A further description of the end of these rich fools. They perish like

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the unseen world :

For he shall take me. [Selah.]

cattle (ver. 12) ; they are laid in the grave ; they descend to Hades (*Sheōl*, the world of spirits), and there they are like a flock of sheep, with death for their shepherd, - air beauty and their glory gone.

IS THEIR SHEPHERD, i.e. feeds them (not feeds *on* them, as the E.V.), tends them. LXX, *θάνατος ποιμανεῖ αὐτοῦς* ; Symm., *νεμήσει αὐτοῦς* ; Jerome, *pascet eos*. They have been like a flock fed to the full in fat pastures during the day : they are now like a flock which the shepherd, when night comes, puts into the fold.

HAVE DOMINION ; or, have trampled upon them, putting their feet, as it were, upon the neck of prostrate foes. LXX, *κατακυριεύσουσιν*. Stated as a past fact, because the destruction of the wicked is also regarded as already accomplished (the pret. is used in the first clause of the verse).

IN THE MORNING. Apparently the morning of deliverance is meant, after the night of misery and suffering which they have experienced at the hand of their oppressors. The Patristic and other expositors understand it of the morning of the resurrection, and the kingdom and dominion which the saints shall then share with Christ. But see on verse 15.

15. The lot of the righteous is now contrasted with that of the wicked, but with a personal application to the Psalmist himself, "God shall redeem my soul."

BUT, or "only," as an exception to the general lot of men, such as those before described.

FROM THE POWER OF THE UNSEEN WORLD ; lit. "from the hand of *Sheōl*," i.e. the grave and Hades.

FOR HE SHALL TAKE ME. This short half-verse is, as Böttcher remarks, the more weighty from its very shortness. The same expression occurs again lxxiii. 24, "Thou shalt take me" ; the original of both being Gen. v. 24. where it is

used of the translation of Enoch, "He was not ; for God took him."

We have, then, in this passage, again (comp. xvi. 11 ; xvii. 15), the strong hope of eternal life with God, if not the hope of a resurrection. In the preceding verse, in the very midst of the gloomy picture which he draws of the end of the ungodly, there breaks forth one morning ray of light — the bright anticipation of the final triumph of the good over the evil. This is the inextinguishable hope which animates the church of the Old Testament, as well as that of the New. Righteousness *shall* eventually, must in its very nature, reign upon the earth. The wicked shall find their end in *Sheōl* (see ix. 17 [18]), and the righteous shall trample on their graves. This, and not more than this, seems to have been the meaning, originally, of the Psalmist in the words, "And the righteous have dominion over them in the morning." But now that he comes to speak of himself, and his own personal relation to God, he rises into a higher strain. He who knows and loves God has the life of God, and can never perish. That life must survive even the shock of death. "God," says the Psalmist, "shall redeem my soul from the hand of Hades, for he shall take me," as he took Enoch, and as he took Elijah to himself. We are not, of course, to suppose that the sacred poet himself expected to be taken up alive to heaven ; but those great facts of former ages were God's witnesses to man of his immortality, and of the reality of a life with him beyond this world. It is a hope based on facts like these which here shines forth. It is a hope, not a revealed certainty. It rests on no distinct promise ; it has not assumed the definite form of a doctrine. But it was enough to raise, to cheer, to encourage those who saw ungodliness prospering in this world. The end of the wicked, after all, was a thick darkness which had never been penetrated ;

- 16 Be not thou afraid when a man groweth rich,  
 When the glory of his house is increased :  
 17 For when he dieth he can take nothing (away with him),  
 His glory cannot descend after him :  
 18 For though he blesseth his soul in his life, —  
 And men praise thee when thou doest good to thyself,—  
 19 He shall come to the generation of his fathers,  
 Who nevermore see the light.  
 20 Man, in honor, and having no understanding,  
 Is like to the beasts (that) are destroyed.

the end of the righteous, life with God. (See the same contrast in xvii. 15, and note there.)

16. Having encouraged himself with this hope, he now turns to encourage others.

18. BLESSETH HIS SOUL, i.e. pronounces himself a happy man. Comp. Deut. xxix. 19 [18], "Blesseth himself in his heart," and the address of the rich man to his soul, Luke xii. 19, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." The second clause of the verse is parenthetical, and the sentiment is a general one: "When thou (i.e. any one doest good)," etc. Symm. ἐπαινέσουσί σε ἐὰν καλῶς ποιήσῃς σεαυτῷ.

19. HE SHALL COME. According to the present text, "it shall come," i.e. the soul (ver. 18), which is the only subject, if the verb here is in the 3d pers. fem. Some expositors, however,

alleging that such an expression is not used of the *soul*, would take the verb here as 2d pers. masc., "Thou shalt come," as if the rich man were addressed; but this involves the exceeding harshness of a return, immediately after, to the 3d pers., "Thou shalt come to the generation of *his* fathers." It is better, therefore, with all the older versions, to read קָבוֹא, "he shall come," instead of תָּבוֹא, "it shall come."

20. The Psalm concludes with the refrain, as at verse 12, but with the alteration of one word. Instead of "abideth not," we have now, "and hath no understanding," or rather, as a sort of adverbial clause, "and without understanding." There is, consequently, a fresh idea here. There the statement is, that men in general are like dumb cattle; here, that only if they possess not the true wisdom, they perish like the brutes.

<sup>a</sup> See on xlii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> עֲקָבִי, "the iniquity of my heels," LXX, ἀνομία τῆς πτέρνης μου; Symm., ἀν. τῶν ἰχνέων μου; Jerome, *iniquitas calcanei mei*, the heels being taken as = "steps," and "the iniquity of my steps," meaning "my errors," which are said to compass a man about, because they bring punishment upon him. But עֲקָב is not used like אֲשֵׁר, in a moral sense, but always as that which is the object of attack, the vulnerable part of the man. (Comp. Gen. iii. 15). Hence most modern interpreters derive עֲקָבִי from an adj. עָקַב, "a supplanter," one who, as it were, trips another up by the heel (as perhaps the Syr. "my enemies.") But such a form does not occur elsewhere, and it is unnecessary to introduce it here; nor need we punctuate עֲקָב, as Hupfeld proposes. "The iniquity



of my heels" is the iniquity which attacks them, lies in wait for them, like a serpent in the path; and the construction may be defended and explained by reference to xlv. 15 [16], as mentioned in the note on ver. 5. The second member of this verse may depend logically on בְּיָמַי in the first, "in the days when," etc.

<sup>e</sup> הַבְּטָחִים. The subj. of the following clause, where it is resumed and expanded in אֶחָד and אִישׁ, and a transition is made from the constr. with the partic. to that with the fin. verb (Gesen. § 134, 2, Rem. 2). Those who take עֲקָבַי to mean "supplanters," carry on the construction into this verse, "my supplanters who trust," etc.

<sup>d</sup> אֶחָד, the accus. placed first in the sentence; lit. "a brother can a man not redeem." [Delitzsch, however, takes it as nom. "a brother, i.e. one who is only of the same flesh and blood, cannot redeem a man."] אֶחָד stands without the suffix, instead of אֶחָדִי, as occurs in similar instances, Ezek. v. 10; xviii. 18; Mic. vii. 6; Mal. i. 6. There is no reason, with Ewald and others, to read אֶחָד and יִפְדֶּה, "surely a man cannot be redeemed." The position of the negative before both tenses of the verb (instead of coming, as is more common, between the infin. and the fut. פ' לֹא י' ) is noticeable. Comp. Gen. iii. 4; Amos ix. 8 (Gesen. § 131, 3, Rem. 1).

<sup>e</sup> וְחָרַל. The subject of this verb is clearly פְּדִיּוֹן, "It (the redemption of the soul) hath ceased for ever," i.e. there is an end of it, it must be given up. So Ewald "dass es fehlet auf immer." Gesen. and others take the verb here in its active signification, "He (i.e. the person who would redeem) has given it up"; but חָרַל in this sense is always followed by the prep. בִּן, and the construction of the sentence is rendered less simple.

<sup>f</sup> כִּי. The particle here confirms the preceding negation, by introducing the opposite = "yea, rather (or for, on the contrary), see (it) he must." Comp. 1 Kings xxi. 15. There is no need to supply any new object to יִרְצָהוּ, or to carry on the construction, as in our version, "For he seeth that wise men," etc.

<sup>g</sup> קְרָבָם. The Chald., LXX, and Syr. evidently read קְרָבָם, "their grave (graves) are their houses for ever" (comp. Eccl. xii. 5, where the grave is called "the long home" of man), which gives a good sense, and is the simplest reading; but the other is defensible; nor is there any reason to render, with Hupfeld, "Their inward hearts are their houses," etc., i.e. their houses fill all their thoughts (as in xlv. 8 [9], "myrrh are all thy garments," instead of "all thy garments are full of myrrh.")

<sup>h</sup> קָרְאוּ ב' . This has been rendered, "men call upon their names (i.e.

praise them) upon the earth (or far and wide).” So Ewald, “sie die hochgepriesen waren überall!” But בָּשֵׁם ק’ does not mean “to praise,” but to “call on, invoke,” etc., and is always used of Jehovah, and the plur. אֲרָצוֹת cannot = אֲרָץ; it means “lands,” as in the parall. we have “houses.” We have no instance of an exactly parallel construction, but the meaning is sufficiently clear, and has been given by the older interpreters, LXX, and Th., ἐπεκαλέσαντο τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῶν γαιῶν αὐτῶν; Jerome, *vocaverunt nominibus suis terras suas*.

<sup>1</sup> שָׁחַי for שָׁחַי, from שָׁחַי, as if from שָׁחַי, as lxxiii. 9, no definite subject need be supplied. “They (indef.) lay or place them,” = They are laid; שָׁחַי is used in the same sense, lxxxviii. 7. I have translated “gathered,” because of the prep. לְ following, and because of the comparison with a flock.

<sup>k</sup> צִוְּרָם (as Isa. xlv. 16) or צִוְּרָם, “their form) i.e. not merely the *bodily* form, but the whole outward show of the man) is for the consumption of Sheōl, i.e. is destined to be consumed by Sheōl (Gesen. § 132, 3, Rem. 1). Symm., τὸ δὲ κρατερὸν αὐτῶν παλαιώσει ἄδης; Jerome, *figura eorum conteretur in inferno*.

<sup>1</sup> מִדֹּבָל לוֹ, either “out of (i.e. from) its dwelling,” or “without its dwelling,” i.e. so that it has no dwelling more, מִן being used in its negative sense; the latter is preferable here. The English prep. “out of” has the same ambiguity, as it may mean either “from,” or “without.”

## PSALM L.

THIS Psalm furnishes us with no evidence as to the time of its composition, but in elegance and sublimity of language, in force and dignity, it is worthy of the best days of Hebrew poetry. It is a magnificent exposition of the true nature of that service and worship which God requires from man. It rebukes the folly which thinks that religion is a matter of sacrifices and gifts, and declares that obedience and thanksgiving are the true fulfilling of the law. It condemns alike a prevalent formalism and a prevalent hypocrisy. How needful it was to insist upon such truths we learn from the whole history of Israel, and the perpetual and indignant remonstrances of the prophets. The tendency to substitute the outward act for the inward, the sacrifices of bulls and goats for the sacrifice of thanksgiving, was deeply ingrained in the nation, till at last it ossified in Pharisaism, and wore its most hideous aspect on that day of solemn Passover, when the sacrifices of the law

were offered by those whose hands were stained with the greatest crime which the world has seen.

The Psalm thus inculcates at length the same doctrine which we find in briefer lines in Psalms xl. 6-8 [7-9]; li. 17 [18]; lxix. 30, etc. [31, etc.], and which is implied in xv. and xxiv. 1-6. In its general tone and character it is essentially prophetic. It consists of three principal parts:

I. A magnificent exordium, in which the whole scene of judgment is described. As formerly, at the *giving* of the law on Sinai, so now, God is represented as appearing in Zion for *the explanation* of it, and for judgment against its transgressors (ver. 1-6).

II. From his judgment-seat God solemnly rebukes the errors and delusions which prevailed as to the nature of his service. He reminds his people of the peculiar relation in which they stand to him, and asks if they can believe that sacrifices, merely as sacrifices, can be of any value to him who has all creatures at his command. Thanksgiving and prayer are the sacrifices in which he delights, and these will best avail in the day of trouble (ver. 7-15).

III. But there were those in Israel who not only exalted the outward service unduly, but who made its punctual observance a cloak for, and a makeweight against, their iniquity. The first evil, indeed, of superstitious formalism naturally engendered the still deadlier evil of conscious hypocrisy. Against this, sentence is now pronounced; and again the truth, already enunciated, is repeated, that the love of a grateful heart is the sacrifice which is truly pleasing to God (ver. 16-23).

In verses 8-15, Hengstenberg remarks, that prevailing errors as to the *First Table* of the Law, the worship of God, are condemned. In verses 16-21, the discourse turns to the *Second Table*. Here those are reproved who have the law of God constantly in their mouths, and at the same time wickedly transgress it in their behavior towards their neighbor.

### [A Psalm of Asaph.\*]

#### I. 1 THE God of gods, Jehovah, hath spoken,

And called the earth, from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof.

1-6. The Psalm opens with a description of God's coming to judge his people. He comes now to Zion, as once he came to Sinai. He comes with all the gloom and terrors of thunder and lightning and storm. He summons before his

judgment-seat those whom he has taken into covenant with himself; and at the same time, as exercising universal dominion, he calls heaven and earth to be his witnesses against them.

1. THE GOD OF GODS. This is, there

- 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,  
God hath shined.
- 3 Our God cometh, and surely will not<sup>b</sup> keep silence!  
A fire before him devours,  
And round about him a tempest rages:
- 4 He calls to the heavens from above,  
And to the earth that he may judge his people.
- 5 "Gather to me, my beloved,  
They that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

can be no doubt, the proper rendering of the words *El Elohim*; as the LXX, Θεὸς θεῶν, and not as Aq., Symm., Th., ἰσχυρὸς θεός; still less have we here three distinct names of God, *El, Elohim, Jehovah*, as Delitzsch and Hengstenberg suppose, and as the Masoretic accentuation would imply. These three names of God occur in the same way in Josh. xxii. 22, where they are twice repeated, and where they are in like manner separated by the accents. This is the only use of the name *Jehovah* in the Psalm, which is in accordance with the general Elohistic character of the second book; but the adjunct, "God of gods," is certainly remarkable. The peculiar use of the divine names in the Psalms, and in the historical books, is however too large a question to be satisfactorily discussed in a note.

**HATH SPOKEN**, and in the next verse **HATH SHINED**; the preterites being employed because, as Ewald explains, the whole scene had first presented itself in a concrete form, the more imposing, because it was thus presented to the poet's eye; and though afterwards, in order to narrate the vision, it would be necessary for him to arrange in detail and in order the several parts, still he would naturally go back to the first impression of the whole upon him, and so describe the scene as *past*.

**THE EARTH**, as afterwards "the heaven and the earth," are summoned as witnesses of the solemn act of judgment, and as lending grandeur to the whole awful scene—borrowed, as Isa. i. 2, from Deut. xxxii. 1.

**2. THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY.** Comp. xlviii. 2 [3]. The same expression is applied to Zion also in Lam. ii. 15. In 1 Macc. ii. 12, the Temple is called ἡ καλλονὴ ἡμῶν. Zion would be so called, as possessing the sanctuary, whether tabernacle or temple.

**HATH SHINED.** Comp. lxxx. 1 [2]; Deut. xxxiii. 2.

**3.** God is seen coming, the devouring fire and the mighty tempest being the accompaniments of his presence, and the symbols of the judgment which he will execute. See the more elaborate working out of the same image in xviii. 7–15 [8–16]. Comp. xcvii. 2–6.

**A TEMPEST RAGES**; lit. "it is tempestuous exceedingly," the verb being used impersonally.

**5.** All nature having been summoned as witness to the awful scene, God now speaks.

**GATHER.** etc. To whom are these words addressed? Many suppose, to the angels, as the ministers of God's will. But it is unnecessary to make the expression more definite than it is in the Psalm.

**MY BELOVED**, not "my saints," as E.V., but "those who have obtained favor, grace, in my sight" (the whole nation being so called, "Non ut omnibus promiscue reddat verae pietatis testimonium, sed ut melius ad finem vocationis suae attendant"), or, as is explained in the parallel, "those whom I have taken into covenant with myself." See note on xvi. 10. God has made himself known to Israel; he has given them his law and his covenant; and he comes now to



6 And the heavens have declared his righteousness,  
For God is Judge himself. [Selah.]

II. 7 "Hear, O my people, and I will speak ;  
O Israel, and I will testify against thee :  
God, (even) thy God, (am) I.

8 Not because of thy sacrifices do I reprove thee,  
Yea, thy burnt-offerings (have been) before me always.

judge them, to see whether they have kept his law, whether they have been faithful to his covenant.

BY SACRIFICE ; lit. "upon sacrifice," as that by means of which the covenant was sealed (Ex. xxiv. 8.)

6. This verse is quasi-parenthetical. It states the fact that God having called to the heavens, the heavens *have* announced the righteousness of God (the verb is in the *historic* tense, and cannot be rendered as a *future*, as so many interpreters render it), a prelude, as it were, to the solemn judgment which follows. Comp. xcvii. 6.

FOR GOD IS JUDGE. God is now about to act as Judge himself, the participle being, as often, rather a future than a present participle. Others, "*That* God is Judge"; but this rendering of the particle does not harmonize so well with the preceding clause, where the object of the verb, viz. "His righteousness," is already given. If there were no such object, the sentence would stand: "the heavens have declared *that* God," etc.; but as it is, the reason is given why God's *righteousness* is declared ; *for*, etc.

7. Then judgment opens. The whole nation is called before the bar of its Judge, who is "God" (the God of the world), and "*thy* God" (the God of Israel). Calvin : "Nam quum Deus sim, compescere omnem proterviam debet majestas mea, ut ad vocem meam siletet omnis caro. Inter vos autem quibus me patefeci in Deum eo plus obsequii merebar."

AND I WILL SPEAK ; or, "*that I may speak*," and in the next clause, "*that I may testify*," the paragogic form of the verb denoting a purpose.

TESTIFY AGAINST THEE ; or perhaps, "conjure thee," "solemnly warn thee"; Ewald, "dass ich ermahne dich"; Maurer, *Ut te graviter hortor*.

GOD (EVEN) THY GOD, in an Elohistic Psalm, instead of "Jehovah, thy God" (see xlv. 7 [8]), with reference probably to the Mosaic formula, as at the beginning of the Decalogue (Ex. xx. 2). Compare the shorter formula, "I am Jehovah," (Ex. vi. 2, 6-8), which is so often repeated in the solemn enactment of different laws in the Book of Leviticus. It is the utterance both of the Lawgiver and of the Judge.

8. The reason for this act of judgment is given. First, negatively ; it is not because the people had neglected the externals of the law, or had forgotten to offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. They had brought them ; but they had brought them as if the act were everything, and as if the meaning of the act, and the spirit in which it was done, were nothing. But God demands no service for its own sake, but only as the expression of an obedient will. A thankful heart is more than all burnt-offerings.

The prophets are full of the like sentiments. Thus, in Isaiah, God expostulates, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams," etc. (i. 12 ; compare also lviii. and lxvi. 3). Micah asks, "Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams ?" etc. (vi. 6-8). Hosea testifies, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And so deep-rooted was this tendency in the people to exaggerate the importance of the dead work, to bring the sacrifice of the dumb animal instead of the sacrifice of the heart, that Jeremiah carries the opposition between sacrifices

- 9 I would not take out of thine house a bullock,  
 Nor he-goats out of thy folds ;  
 10 For mine is every beast<sup>e</sup> of the forest,  
 (And) the cattle upon (the) mountains by thousands.  
 11 I know every bird of (the) mountains,  
 And that which moveth in the field is with me.  
 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee ;  
 For mine (is) the world and the fulness thereof.  
 13 Should I eat the flesh of bulls,  
 Or drink the blood of he-goats ?  
 14 Sacrifice to God thanksgiving,  
 And pay to the Most High thy vows ;  
 15 And call upon me in the day of distress,  
 I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

III. 16 But to the wicked saith God :

"What hast thou to do to tell my statutes,  
 And that thou hast taken my covenant into thy mouth?

and obedience even to the extreme of a paradox. "For I spake not unto your fathers, and I commanded them not, in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offering and sacrifice; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hear my voice," etc. (vii. 22, 23).

SACRIFICES, i.e. peace-offerings, often joined with BURNT-OFFERINGS, as li. 17 [18]. See also xl. 6 [7], the two being mentioned probably as representing and including all manner of sacrifices.

The following verses, 9-13, are in a strain of lofty irony, in which the gross stupidity which could suppose that the flesh and blood of the victims were of themselves acceptable to God, is finely exposed.

10. CATTLE. The word is most commonly used of *tame* animals, but here generally of large herds of grazing cattle.

BY THOUSANDS; lit. "on the mountains of a thousand," i.e. where a thousand are; or, where they are by thousands.

11. THAT WHICH MOVETH. Comp. lxxx. 13 [14]. The exact meaning of

the Hebrew word is doubtful. Ewald (2d ed.) renders it, "fruit of the field," but the above is the interpretation of Gesen. (*Thesaur* in v.), and is the one commonly adopted. In his third edition Ewald has *Brut*.

14. There follows now, positively, what God requires. The sacrifices which he would have are thanksgiving, and the prayer of faith in the time of trouble. Comp. li. 18 [19].

Under the name of *thanksgiving* and *prayer* all the rest of religion is comprehended, as Calvin truly observes: "Nec vero ordinem invertit, a Dei laude incipiens. Videri quidem posset haec ratio esse prae-postera, quum invocatio gratiarum actionem praecedat: sed quia hinc orandi principium ducitur, quum adscribitur Deo justus ac debitus honor, atque haec etiam fidei rudimenta sunt, Deum quaerere tanquam unicum bonorum omnium fontem, non temere propheta laudem in primo gradu locavit."

THY VOWS. See note on xxii. 25. Comp. cxvi. 13.

16. The former part of the divine

- 17 Whereas for thee — thou hatest instruction,  
And hast cast my words behind thee ;
- 18 When thou sawest a robber — thou foundest pleasure  
in him,  
And with adulterers (has been) thy portion ;
- 19 Thy mouth thou hast let loose in wickedness,  
And thy tongue frameth deceit ;
- 20 Thou sittest (and) speakest against thy brother,  
Against thy mother's son thou givest a thrust.
- 21 These things thou hast done, and (because) I kept silence  
Thou thoughtest I was surely <sup>d</sup> like thyself ;  
(But) I will reprove thee, and lay (the matter) in order  
before thine eyes."
- 22 Consider, now, this, O ye that forget God,  
Lest I tear (you) and there be none to rescue.

sentence was directed against those who attached undue importance to the external acts of religion. What follows is directed against those who make use of the outward observances of religion as a mask and cloak under which they may hide their iniquities. First formalists, and next hypocrites are condemned. With this and the following verses comp. Rom. ii. 17-24.

TO TELL, i.e. "to number," "to count up," as if with a view to their more punctual observance.

17. WHEREAS FOR THEE. The pronoun is emphatic, and is thus placed to mark the strong contrast between such a character and the law which he professes to understand. Comp. Isa. i. 15.

18. FOUNDEST PLEASURE IN HIM, i.e. in his society ; in intercourse with him, etc. Comp. Job xxxiv. 9. The transgression of three commandments of the Decalogue is specified, in the same way as in Rom. ii. 17, etc., by way of example.

19. FRAMETH ; lit. "weaveth." Comp. Lat. *texere fraudes*, etc.

20. THOU SITTEST, i.e. in company with others who slander and speak evil. (See i. 1.)

THY MOTHER'S SON ; stronger than

"thy brother," and intended to mark the *unnatural* blackness of such conduct.

GIVEST A THRUST (the noun occurs only here) ; for, perhaps (as the LXX, *ἐτίθεις σκάνδαλον*), "puttest a stumbling-block." Others, however, take the word here in the sense of "shame, reproach," and this suits the parallelism better.

21. And because the sinner is allowed to go on long unpunished, he waxes confident by his impunity, and imagines that God is like himself, and that good and evil are things indifferent ; not that he *says* so in words, but his conduct shows his ignorance both of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of the truth and righteousness of God.

KEEP SILENCE, i.e. did not manifest my abhorrence of sin by signal vengeance on the ungodly. "*Hoc ludibrium Dei*," says Calvin, "*gravissime exagitat* (propheta), *quod eum sceleribus favere existiment*. Neque enim atrociori contumelia potest effici, quam dum justitia sua spoliatur." But the long-suffering of God cannot always be abused. The time comes when the sinner is made to feel that God is a righteous Judge.

I WILL LAY IN ORDER — the whole sin in all its evil course, its poisonous

23 Whoso sacrificeth thanksgiving glorifieth me,<sup>e</sup>  
 And whoso prepareth (his) way,<sup>f</sup>  
 I will make him see the salvation of God.

root, and its deadly branches, shall be put before the man. The sin that he did and would not look at, God shall make him look upon. The sin which he thought he could hide from God, or which, with strange infatuation, he supposed God took no notice of, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. "Sic enim interpretor verbum *ordinare*, quod Deus distincto ordine catalogum omnium scelerum proponet, quem (velint, nolint) legere et agnoscere cogantur."

23. This third great division of the Psalm concludes with the assertion of the same truth as the second. The lesson of the Psalm for all who pervert the law of God, whether to purposes of superstition or hypocrisy, is the same: God desires the heart and the will of man as the true sacrifice.

SACRIFICETH THANKSGIVING, as above, verse 14. The verb is designedly employed, in order to mark the nature of the *sacrifice* which God will have: slay not victims, bring not animals, but bring thanksgiving as sacrifices. The E.V. with its rendering, "*Offereth praise*," loses sight of the distinct reference to the Mosaic sacrifices, which are not indeed absolutely superseded — the time had not yet come for this — but are put in their true place. The very great prominence again given to thanksgiving, is worthy of our careful notice. There is no duty so commonly forgotten. God showers down his benefits upon us with

both hands, large and free, and we receive them as a matter of course, and never consider whose love has bestowed them; and thus, in our unthankfulness, we rob God of his honor. Further, as thanksgiving is thus dwelt upon because it is so commonly forgotten, so it is also put as the sum of religion because it, in fact, includes all else. Faith, and prayer, and self-denial, and the endurance of the cross, and all holy exercises, are, as Calvin observes, comprised in this one grace. For it is by faith only that we are sensible of God's goodness; therefore he who is truly of a thankful spirit has faith; he who is thankful triumphs over his earthly trials; he who is thankful is accomplishing man's highest end, inasmuch as in all things he gives glory to God.

The instruction of the Psalm abides; it has not lost its force. The sacraments and ordinances of the Christian church may become to us, what sacrifice and offering were to the Jews, a mere *opus operatum*; a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet have no love; a man may be punctual in his attendance at all holy ordinances, and yet cherish iniquity in his heart, and, upon occasion, secretly practise it. Hence the Psalm is truly prophetic; that is, universal in its character. It deals with "the sinners and the hypocrites in Zion," but it reaches to all men, in all places, to the end of time.

<sup>a</sup> אֲסַפִּי. This is the first Psalm, and the only one in this book, ascribed to Asaph. In the third book of the Psalter, eleven Psalms, lxxiii.-lxxxiii., have his name prefixed to them. He was one of the three choir-leaders or chief singers appointed under the direction of David to preside over his great choral company of Levites, the other two being Heman and Ethan (or Jeduthun). Comp. 1 Chron. xv. 16, etc. with xxv. 1, etc. Their special instruments of music were cymbals of brass (1 Chron. xv. 19), with which, and with harps and



psalteries, they were said to prophesy (xxv. 1). On the occasion of bringing up the ark to Jerusalem, David delivered "to Asaph and his brethren" the Psalm which had been composed to celebrate that event (1 Chron. xvi. 7); and in the division of the Levitical services which became necessary, as the tabernacle still remained at Gibeon, Asaph and his company were selected "to minister before the ark of Jehovah, and to record, and to thank and praise Jehovah the God of Israel" (1 Chron. xvi. 4, 5). In later times, Asaph was ranked with David as one of the famous singers of Israel. Comp. Neh. xii. 46 with 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

<sup>b</sup> וְאַל-יִחַרְשׁ. The optative seems to be required by the form of the negative (אַל = μή) with the second verb. Still, it must be confessed that the abrupt introduction of a wish here disturbs the flow of the language, and this is not obviated even if, with Hupfeld, we suppose this to be a common formula, in which God is called upon to manifest himself. Ewald renders, "Heran kommt unser Gott und darf nicht schweigen"; Bunsen, "... mag nicht"; Delitzsch, "Kommen wird... und kann nicht schweigen." He explains the negative as being used subjectively to express the conviction of the writer's mind, = *nequaquam silebit*. Maurer remarks: "Non sine quadam elegantia in media adventantis Dei descriptione וְאַל *neque est quod sileat dicit*." The nearest parallels to this use of the negative are to be found in xxxiv. 5 [6] (where see note) and xli. 3.

<sup>c</sup> חִיָּהוּ. The older form of the stat. constr. for חַיִּית. See lxxix. 2; civ. 11, 20; Isa. lvi. 9, all imitating the earliest instance in Gen. i. 24. This old case-ending is either in *i* or in *-i*. See on cxiii. note <sup>a</sup>; cxiv. note <sup>b</sup>; and Ewald, § 211, b. 2 (Eng. trans. 406).

<sup>d</sup> חִיָּהוּ, constr. infin. instead of the absolute before the finite verb. The sentence is in the *oratio obliqua*, as x. 13; Gen. xii. 13. (Gesen. § 155, 4 c).

<sup>e</sup> וְכִבְדֵּהֶם. Pausal form, as if from a termination כִּבְדֵּי, instead of כִּבְדֵּי, or כִּבְדֵּי, but without parallel elsewhere, apparently formed after the plural epenthetic form, like וְקִרְאֵהֶם, Prov. i. 28. Comp. viii. 17; Hos. v. 15. (Gesen. § 58, 4).

<sup>f</sup> שֶׁם. The LXX read שֶׁם, καὶ ἐκεῖ ὁδὸς ἣν δείξω αὐτῷ τὸ σωτήριον Θεοῦ. But the present reading is ancient. Jerome renders: *qui ordinat viam*. Böttcher explains: *viam faciens*, *h.e.* recta incedere (*lege agere*) *parans*. It may be a question, however, with which of the two preceding clauses the words וְשֶׁם דָּרְךָ should be joined. Delitzsch takes them with the last: "He that offereth thanks, honoreth me aright, and prepareth a way wherein I may show him the salvation of God."

## PSALM LI.

THIS Psalm is the expression of a deep and unfeigned repentance. It is a prayer, first, for forgiveness, with a humble confession of sinful deeds springing from a sinful nature as their bitter root; and then for renewal and sanctification through the Holy Ghost; together with vows of thankfulness for God's great mercy to the sinner, and holy resolutions for the future.

It is the first of a series of Psalms (li.-lxxv.) which, in the second book of the Psalter, are ascribed to David, and, according to the title, was written by him after his great sin, when the words of the prophet Nathan roused his conscience from its uneasy slumber. Before that, we cannot doubt, remorse had been busy with him. Before that he had felt his misery, had fought against it, but had refused to confess his sin. But the home thrust, "Thou art the man," pierced him to the heart, and this Psalm is but the fuller record of the confession, "I have sinned," which the history mentions so briefly.

So profound a conviction of sin, so deep and unfeigned a penitence, so true a confession, a heart so tender, so contrite, a desire so fervent for renewal, a trust so humble, so filial in the forgiving love of God, are what we find nowhere else in the Old Testament, but what we might surely expect from "the man after God's own heart." This Psalm, indeed, and the thirty-second, justify the title thus given him. In them we see the true man. Great as had been his sin, it was not the sin of a hardened nature, of the merely selfish sensualist, of the despot to whom all men were but as tools to minister to his pleasures and his crimes. And, therefore, when the prophet comes to him, he turns to God with a real sorrow, and God meets him, as the father in the parable meets his erring son, with a free forgiveness.

Many objections have been raised by modern literary scepticism to the genuineness of the title.

1. It has been said that the Psalm could not have been written by David, because the prayer in verse 18, "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem," could only have been uttered at a time when those walls lay in ruins, and therefore either during or shortly after the Babylonish captivity.

But to this objection two different replies have been given. (1) That the expression is merely figurative, and that David, conscious how grievously he had imperilled by his sin the safety of his kingdom, here prays God to uphold and protect it. (2) That the last two verses of the Psalm are a later addition, made, perhaps, after the Exile; like the

doxologies, for instance, at the close of xli. and lxxii. This is most probable. See note on verse 18.

2. It has been argued that many of the expressions in the Psalm are unsuitable in David's mouth.

(a) David, it is said, when Nathan came to him, in 2 Sam. xii., at once confessed his sin and received the announcement of pardon, whereas here he seeks pardon. But God's forgiveness is not always received fully and at once by one who has greatly sinned. See more in note on verse 9.

(b) The Psalmist prays not for forgiveness of some one heinous sin, but of many, and for the renewal of his whole nature. But he who sees sin in its true light will see it in its hidden source and in its manifold evil fruits.

(c) The knowledge of sin in its deep-seated, innate depravity, its clinging taint, is a knowledge not to be expected so early as the time of David, — which is a merely arbitrary assertion.

I see, then, no ground for departing from the constant and reasonable belief of the church, that the Psalm was written by David under the circumstances indicated in the title.

It consists of three principal divisions :

I. The prayer for forgiveness (ver. 1-8).

II. The prayer for renewal (ver. 9-12).

III. The holy resolutions of one who has experienced the forgiving love and the sanctifying grace of God (ver. 13-19).

The Psalm concludes with a prayer for Zion, and the utterance of a hope that the time will come when God will be honored with "sacrifices of righteousness."

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet came to him after he had come in unto Bathsheba.]

I. 1 BE gracious unto me, O God, according to thy loving kindness,

According to the greatness of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions :

1, 2. The prayer for forgiveness.

1. ACCORDING TO THY LOVING-KINDNESS. In all godly sorrow there is hope. Sorrow without hope may be remorse or despair, but it is not repentance. Hence the true penitent always looks to the loving-kindness of God, even at

the very time when he feels most deeply how he has sinned against it. The cry on his lips is, "My Father," even when he confesses, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

THE GREATNESS, etc. It is in this that David seeks the ground of forgive-

- 2 Wash me thoroughly <sup>a</sup> from my iniquity,  
 And from my sin make me clean.
- 3 For I know my transgressions,  
 And my sin is ever before me.

ness, not in himself. Comp. xxv. 6, 7. The deep sense of the *greatness* of his own sin makes him feel the need of a *great* mercy.

**BLOT OUT.** The forgiveness of sins is expressed by the use of two figures. The first, that of *blotting out*, — “making that which is done as if it had not been done,” — is capable of two explanations: Either (1) it refers to *erasing* from a book or tablet what has been written therein, as Ex. xxxii. 32; Num. v. 23; comp. Ps. lxxix. 28 [29], in which case sin must be regarded as a *debt* entered against the debtor, and so cancelled by being blotted out; or (2) it may mean, in a more general sense, the *wiping away* of a thing, and so its entire removal, as in 2 Kings xxi. 13, it is said, “I will *wipe* (the same word as here) Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish.” And in Isa. xlv. 22, “I will blot out *as a cloud* thy sins,” i.e. take them away as a cloud is swept away by the wind from the face of heaven.

**MY TRANSGRESSIONS.** The use of the plural has been variously explained. Some suppose that the several sins of adultery and murder are thus denoted. So Calvin: “Multiplex ejus culpa erat, quod adulterio adjunxerat perfidiam et crudelitatem: nec unum hominem modo prodiderat vel paucos, sed totum exercitum, pro salute ecclesiae Dei pugnantem.” But this is too superficial a view. No sin ever stands alone; each single transgression is the mother of many transgressions; each is a root of bitterness, whence spring many bitter branches, so that we cannot confess one sin without confessing many. On the various words used here and in the next verse, TRANSGRESSIONS . . . INIQUITY . . . SIN, see note on xxxii. 1.

2. **WASH ME.** This is the second figure employed to denote the working of God’s forgiveness for which David

prays. How is it to be understood? Does it refer only, like the first (the blotting out of sin), to the act of forgiveness, or does it denote the cleansing and purifying of the sinner’s soul, the sanctification of the spirit? The verb כָּפַף, “to wash,” is used of the washing of dirty, spotted garments, like the Greek *πλύνω* (as distinct from *ῥανίζω* = *λούω*, which is used of washing the body); and the figure is commonly employed in reference to the putting away of sin. See Isa. i. 16; Jer. ii. 22; iv. 14; Mal. iii. 2, 3. So far as the figure itself is concerned, it might certainly be symbolical, as all outward washing was, of inward purification. On the other hand, the prayer here is for *forgiveness* of sins — that the burden of guilt may be taken away; and afterwards, in ver. 10 ff., comes the prayer for renewal and sanctification. The verb in the next clause, also, — “cleanse me,” — though a word of more general use, is specially applied to the priest who “*pronounces clean*” the leper, a declarative act. Comp. Lev. xiii. 6, 34. But we must not expect in the Old Testament, and least of all in *prayers*, sharply defined and accurate statements of doctrine. Stier, who understands the “washing,” here of sanctification, says, with perfect truth, that justification and sanctification, though distinct, are always closely connected in scripture. God does not *declare* righteous, without *making* righteous.

**THOROUGHLY**, or perhaps “many times,” as Calvin says: “Minime ambiguum est quin clare asserat non leves esse suas sordes, ut modica lotione elui queant, sed tenaciter haerere, immo esse profundas, ut iteratis lotionibus ad eas purgandas opus sit.”

3. **FOR.** This particle expresses not the reason why God should forgive him, but the reason why *he asks* for forgiveness; namely, his own sense and ac-



4 Against thee — against thee only have I sinned,  
And that which is evil in thine eyes have I done.

knowledge of his sin. Those, however, who adopt the first sense, regard the confession of sin not as the meritorious cause of forgiveness, but rather as its indispensable condition (comp. xxxii. 5; Prov. xxviii. 13). So Luther: "That little word *for* must be understood so as not to imply that his sins must be forgiven him because he had confessed them; for sin is always sin, and deserving of punishment, whether it is confessed or not; still, confession of sin is of importance on this account, — that God will be gracious to none but to those who confess their sin."

I KNOW. There is no need to render, with the E. V., "I acknowledge," though no doubt the *confession* of sin is implied. That, however, is not here prominent, but rather that discernment of sin and of its true nature which leads to a confession of it. In xxxii. 5, "I will confess unto thee" is lit. "I will *make* thee know."

IS EVER BEFORE ME. Comp. xxxii. 3, 4. Luther says: "That is, my sin plagues me, gives me no rest, no peace; whether I eat or drink, sleep or wake, I am always in terror of God's wrath and judgment." But surely here, not the terror of God's wrath and judgment, but the deep sorrow for despite done to God's love and goodness, is the feeling uppermost. David dreads not punishment, but separation from God.

4. Then follows an acknowledgment of the double evil of sin: first, in its aim, and next in its source; first, as done against God, and then as springing from a corrupt nature.

AGAINST THEE ONLY. This language has perplexed commentators, who cannot understand how it could come from the mouth of David, who had been guilty of sins which were so directly against *men*, as well as against God. The sin against Bathsheba whom he had tempted, the sin against Uriah whom he had slain by the sword of another, the sin against his own family which he had polluted,

and against his kingdom which he had weakened, — were not all these sins against men? They were. And yet he says, "Against *thee only* have I sinned."

(1) Some expositors, as Arnobius, Cassiodorus, Nichol. de Lyra (and patristic and Romish divines generally), account for this by saying that David here speaks as king, and that as king he was responsible to no human authority, but only to God. But, though as holding a despotic power he could not be *tried* or *punished* by his subjects, the wrong done, and therefore the sin, was the same, whether done by a prince or by a private person. (2) Others suppose that David means to say that his sin was *known only to God*. So Kimchi and Maldonatus, "*tibi soli, h.e. secreto, nemine conscio*," referring to 2 Sam. xii. 12, "For thou didst it *secretly*"; or, as Geier, "Audacter ac proterve, omni reverentia erga tuos oculos vel te omni praesentem Deum seposita." But such an interpretation falls far short of the whole deep meaning of the passage. (3) Calvin approaches more nearly to the truth. He observes: "I think the words are equivalent to his saying, Lord, though the whole world should acquit me, yet for me it is more than enough that I feel that thou art my Judge, that conscience summons me and drags me to thy bar; so that men's excuses for me are of no avail, whether they spare me, or whether to flatter me they make light of my crime, or try to assuage my grief with soothing words. He intimates, therefore, that he has his eyes and all his senses fixed upon God, and consequently does not care what men think or say. But whoever is thus crushed, yea overwhelmed, by the weight of God's judgment, needs no other accuser, because God alone is more than a thousand others." To this might be added that all human judges can only regard wrong actions as *crimes*; God alone takes cognizance of them as *sins*.

(4) But true as all this is, it scarcely reaches the whole truth. First, then,

That thou mightest be just in thy speaking,<sup>b</sup>  
 (That) thou mightest be pure in thy judging.

the words are to be explained by David's *deep conviction* of sin as sin. For the moment all else is swallowed up in that. Face to face with God, he sees nothing else, can think of nothing else, but his presence forgotten, his holiness outraged, his love scorned. Therefore he must confess and be forgiven by God before he could even think of the wrong done to his neighbor. But, secondly, this deep feeling of the penitent heart, of the heart which loves God above all things, has its root in the very relation in which God stands to his creatures. All sin, as sin, is and must be against God. All wrong done to our neighbor is wrong done to one created in the image of God; all tempting of our neighbor to evil is taking the part of Satan against God, and, so far as in us lies, defeating God's good purpose of grace towards him. All wounding of another, whether in person or property, in body or soul, is a sin against the goodness of God. Hence the apostle says (1 Cor. viii. 12), "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." In like manner, all love to our neighbor is love to God, whom we love in him. On this principle we shall be judged: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto me." It is not, therefore, enough to explain these words of David, "Against thee *only*," by saying that they are the expression of his *own deep sense* ("die Innigkeit des Gefühls," De Wette, Hupfeld) of his guilt and the dishonor done to God. That feeling rested upon the eternal truth of which it was the expression — a truth on which, as Hengstenberg observes, the Decalogue itself is based: "Thou must honor and love God in himself, in those who represent him on earth (Deut. v. 12), in all who bear his image (ver. 13, 14). Comp. Beitr. iii. p. 604. The love of God appears constantly in Deuteronomy, as the *ἐν καὶ τᾷ*, as the one thing which of necessity carries along with it the

fulfilment of the whole law; as, for instance, in chaps. x., xii. Earlier still, in Gen. ix. 6, the punishment of murder is grounded on this, that man bears God's image." "How must David have trembled," says the same commentator, "how must he have been seized with shame and grief, when he referred everything to God, when in Uriah he saw only the image of God, the Holy One, who deeply resented that injury, — the gracious and compassionate One, to whom he owed such infinitely rich benefits, who had lifted him up from the dust of humiliation, had so often delivered him, and had also given him the promise of so glorious a future!"

THAT. Strictly speaking, "in order that," which would imply that the sin was done in order that God's justice might shine the more conspicuously thereby; and this would seem, of course, to make God the author of sin. Hence some, as Aben-Ezra, would connect the conjunction (לְמַעַן, "in order that") not with the words immediately preceding, but with the acknowledgment in verse 3. Nor can I see any objection to such a connection of the clauses. Others again take the conjunction here in the sense of "so that," as marking the *consequence* (ἐκβατικῶς), not the *purpose* of the action preceding = "I have sinned, and the result of my sin has been that thy righteousness and holiness have been manifested," etc. This interpretation, according to the grammarians, inevitably falls to pieces against the hard inexorable canon that "the conjunction always means *in order that*"; in the same way as *ἵνα* in the New Testament. Winer, however (*New Test. Gram.* § 53. 10, 6,) gives the right explanation of the usage of both conjunctions. He shows that their employment is due to a different metaphysical conception on the part of the biblical writers from that which we are in the habit of forming as to the nature of the divine government. They drew no sharp, accurate line between

5 Behold, in iniquity I was brought forth,  
And in sin did my mother conceive me.

events as the consequence of the divine order, and events as following from the divine purpose. To them all was ordained and designed of God. Even sin itself, in all its manifestations, though the whole guilt of it rested with man, did not flow uncontrolled, but only in channels hewn for it by God, and to subserve his purposes. Hence, God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart, to have put a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets, to do evil as well as good in the city, and the like. We must not expect therefore that the Hebrew mind, profoundly impressed as it was with the great phenomena of the universe, and beholding in each the immediate finger of God, but altogether averse from philosophical speculation, should have exactly defined for itself the distinction between an action viewed as the *consequence*, and the same action viewed as the *end* of another action. The mind which holds the simple fundamental truth that all is of God, may also hold, almost as a matter of course, that all is *designed* of God. That from such a view, where the conscience is not healthy, a perilous misconception may arise, is clear from the way in which St. Paul argues upon this very passage in Rom. iii. 4, 5, where he refutes the possible perversion that men are at liberty to sin because thereby God's righteousness is commended. But, after all, there is perhaps no need to press the exact signification of the particle here. The conjunction, which properly expresses purpose, here denotes rather consequence, as in other passages (xxx. 12 [13]; Ex. xi. 9; Deut. xxix. 18; Isa. xlv. 9; Hosea viii. 4).

IN THY SPEAKING, i.e. as is evident from the parallelism, "when thou givest sentence."

IN THY JUDGING; or "when thou judgest," not as the LXX, Aq., and the Vulg., passive, "when thou art judged," and as the verse is quoted in Rom. iii. 4, ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε, i.e. when the justice

of thy dealings is called in question in having suffered thine own servant so grievously to fall.

5. Sin is now regarded in its source. From my very earliest being, from the hour when I was conceived, sin has been with me. Sinfulness consists not merely in so many several sinful acts, but in a sinful and corrupt nature. The depth of the abyss of sin is here opened before the eyes of the penitent with a distinctness of which the instances are comparatively few in the Old Testament. (Comp., however, Job xiv. 4; Gen. viii. 21.) Manifestly not in extenuation, but in aggravation of his sin does David thus speak ("Ad amplificandam malorum suorum gravitatem a peccato originali ducit exordium."—*Calvin*). "He lays on himself the blame of a tainted nature, instead of that of a single fault: not a murder only, but of a murderous nature. 'Conceived in sin.' From first moments up till then, he saw sin—sin—sin; nothing but sin."—*Robertson*. Luther says: "If a man will speak and teach aright of sin, he must consider it in its depth, and show from what *root* it and all that is godless springs, and not apply the term merely to sins that have been committed. For from this error, that men know not and understand not what sin is, arises the other error that they know not nor understand what grace is. . . . According to this Psalm then, we must say that all is sin which is born of father and mother, and from so evil a root nothing good can grow before God." And Calvin: "Here at length he confesses himself guilty, not of one sin only or of many, but he rises to the fountain-head, (acknowledging) that from his mother's womb he has brought nothing with him but sin, and that by nature he is altogether corrupt and as it were smeared over with vices. . . . And of a truth we do not thoroughly acknowledge our sins unless we condemn our whole nature as corrupt." Stier says: "Men may say what they will,



6 Behold, thou delightest in truth in the inward parts,°

And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, that I may be clean ;

Thou shalt wash me, that I may be whiter than snow.

the doctrine of original sin is contained in this passage"; and so it is, precisely in that sense in which the doctrine is alone true ; viz. that sinfulness is innate, that corrupt parents can only have corrupt children. The taint is, and must be, propagated. The later ecclesiastical development of the doctrine, involving the imputation of Adam's sin, and the fiction of a covenant made with Adam in the name of his descendants, is repugnant to reason and has no foundation in Scripture, as Mr. Birks has shown with remarkable force and clearness in his *Difficulties of Belief*, etc. The heathen view of this innate corruption was widely different, because the thought of God did not enter into it. See Cic. *Tusc.* iii. 1, and Marc. Aurel. lib. xi. c. 18.

BEHOLD. The word is used to indicate the attainment of a new and higher knowledge (comp. Job iv. 18 ; xv. 15 ; xxv. 5), as if it had come with something of surprise on the mind, or were seen with a new brightness. The repetition of the word at the beginning of the next verse marks the connection and correlation of the two. On the one hand, lo ! I have seen sin as I never saw it before. On the other, lo ! I have learned that truth is what thou desirest in the secret heart.

6. TRUTH. Uprightness of heart : that very uprightness and integrity which David and other Old Testament saints assert elsewhere, but in which, now under deep conviction of his sinfulness, he feels himself to be so deficient.

7. THOU SHALT PURGE ME. The LXX and Jerome take the verbs in this verse and the next as futures, and so also Ewald, though the majority of modern commentators, with the E.V., take them as imperatives. Both Hengstenberg and Hupfeld argue that they must be imperatives (or optatives) be-

cause of the imperative in verse 9 ; but surely the very fact that we have a change in the mood of the verb there should lead us not to confound the two. Besides, the notion that the verbs in this verse must be imperative proceeds partly from a total misconception as to the true structure of the Psalm, the first division of which ends not with verse 6, but with verse 8, according to a principle which has never yet been sufficiently recognized, viz. that some of the thoughts of one strophe are constantly resumed, with some modification, in another. The use of the future here, as well as the meaning of the verb, has been most happily explained by Donne in his sermon on this verse (Sermon lxii.) : "How soon and to what a height came David here ? He makes his petition, his first petition, with that confidence as that it hath scarce the nature of a petition ; for it is in the original : *Thou wilt purge me, thou wilt wash me* ; thou hadst a gracious will and purpose to do it, before thou didst infuse the will and the desire in me to petition it. Nay, this word may well be translated not only *Thou wilt*, but by the other denotation of the future, *Thou shalt*—*thou shalt purge me, thou shalt wash me* ; Lord, I do but remember thee of thy debt, of that which thy gracious promise hath made thy debt, to show mercy to every penitent sinner. And then, as the word implies confidence and acceleration, infallibility and expedition too, that as soon as I can ask I am sure to be heard ; so does it imply a totality, an entireness, a fulness in the work ; for the root of the word is *peccare*, to sin ; for purging is a purging of peccant humors ; but in this conjugation [the Piel] . . . it hath a privative signification ; . . . and if in our language that were a word in use, it might be translated, *Thou shalt un-sin me.*" I am sorry



8 Thou shalt make me to hear gladness and joy,  
(That) the bones which thou hast crushed may exult.

II. 9 Hide thy face from my sins,  
And blot out all my iniquities.

10 A clean heart create for me, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

that want of space prevents my quoting the beautiful passage, in the same sermon, in which Donne dwells on the truth that God himself alone can thus purge the sinner, — *Domine tu*. It will be found in vol. iii. p. 91 of Alford's edition of his Works.

WITH HYSSOP. In allusion to the lustration enjoined by the Mosaic ritual of the leper (Lev. xiv. 4 ff.) and those who had defiled themselves by contact with a dead body (Num. xix. 6 ff., 18 ff.), the hyssop being dipped in the blood of the bird which had been killed, and so used to sprinkle the person who was to be cleansed. This is certainly a remarkable instance of the manner in which the symbolism of the Mosaic law was understood by a pious Jew. David evidently sees that the outward lustration is a sign of a better cleansing — another proof of that profound spiritual insight which throughout the Psalm is so striking, and which almost justifies St. Augustine's saying, *Sunt quibus expedit cadere*.

THOU SHALT WASH ME. Again in allusion to a further ceremony of purification enjoined by the law — the washing, namely, of the clothes, and the bathing of the body, of the defiled person. WHITER THAN SNOW. Comp. Isa. i. 18.

8. THOU SHALT MAKE ME TO HEAR; not said with reference to God's announcement of forgiveness by the prophet Nathan, or as made in his word, but rather with reference to those public festivals in which the whole congregation would unite in praising God, and in which David hoped now, as a forgiven sinner, to take his own part. He would be one of those who, with a heart full of thankfulness, would openly testify that thankfulness.

THE BONES; not merely, as Hupfeld says, instead of the heart, but as constituting the strength and framework of the body; the crushing of the bones being a very strong figure, denoting the most complete prostration, mental and bodily; see vi. 2 [3].

9. The second division of the Psalm begins here with the renewed prayer for forgiveness. From the confident assurance of the last two verses that God would do that which he asked, David now passes to earnest pleading with God. This is surely what is to be found in all true prayer; it will be marked by fluctuations of feeling; its order will be the order of need, not the order of the intellect. Again, David asks for forgiveness first, and then for renewal. "For though God fully and completely (in solidum) forgives," says Calvin, "still, the narrowness of our faith does not take in so large a goodness on his part, but it must flow down to us gradually and drop by drop (*necesse est ut paulatim distillet*)."

HIDE THY FACE, i.e. thy face of wrath; do not look upon them in anger, or so as to bring me into judgment. In the more common use of the phrase, God is said to "hide his face" in displeasure; the face of God generally signifying his favor.

10. After the prayer for forgiveness there follows now the prayer for renewal and sanctification.

A CLEAN HEART, as the necessary condition of communion with God. Cf. xxiv. 4 and Matt. v. 8.

CREATE. A word always used strictly of the creative power of God. The whole spiritual being of the man had, as it were, fallen into a chaos. The pure heart and the childlike feeling of confidence could only return as a new

- 11 Cast me not away from thy presence,  
And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Give me again the gladness of thy salvation,  
And uphold me (with) a willing spirit.

creation, *καὶνὴ κτίσις*. Comp. Eph. ii. 10; iv. 24. With this prayer compare the promise in Jer. xxiv. 7; Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26.

A STEADFAST SPIRIT; one, that is, firm in faith, not easily swayed hither and thither through its own weakness or by blasts of temptation, and therefore also firm and constant in obedience. Jerome, rightly, *spiritum stabilem*; it is more than the *πνεῦμα εὐθέες* of the LXX, the *spiritum rectum* of the Vulgate, and "the right spirit" of the E. V.

11. CAST ME NOT AWAY. Stier sees an allusion partly to the exclusion of the leper from the congregation (Lev. xiii. 46), and partly to the rejection of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 13, 14); but the expressions employed in both cases are different. The phrase, as it occurs 2 Kings xiii. 23; xvii. 20; xxiv. 20; Jer. vii. 15, refers to the rejection of the nation of Israel from the favor of God.

TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME. Calvin infers from this that the Spirit had not been altogether taken away from David, and hence draws the consolatory conclusion; that the faith of the elect cannot finally fail. The Lutherans, on the other hand, supposing a total loss, and deeming a total renewal necessary, insert the word "again,"—"Take not (again) thy Holy Spirit from me." But the words do not justify either interpretation. The petition expresses rather the holy fear of the man who has his eyes open to the depth and iniquity of sin, lest at any moment he should be left without the succor of that Divine Spirit, who was the only source in him of every good thought, of every earnest desire, of every constant resolution. It is the cry of one who knows, as he never knew before, the weakness of his own nature, and the strength of temptation, and the need of divine help; and to whom therefore nothing seems so dread-

ful as that God should withdraw his Spirit. At the same time we need not hesitate to admit, that such a prayer in the lips of David could not mean all that it means now to a Christian. David could hardly have understood by the Holy Spirit a divine person, nor could he have been made partaker of the Spirit in the same sense that Christians are; for not till Jesus was glorified was the Spirit given in all his light and power, in all his quickening, sanctifying grace. But we see in such prayers how marvelously the words of Scripture are adapted to our necessities; how, used at first as it were by children, they still express the maturest feelings of our Christian manhood, and, as in this instance, have even become permanently fixed in our Christian liturgies.

12. The first clause of the verse again puts, as a petition, that which in verse 8 is the utterance of a confident hope and trust.

WITH A WILLING SPIRIT; or, "a free spirit." Comp. Ex. xxxv. 5, 22, "willing of heart." The meaning "noble," and the use of the word as a substantive "a prince," are apparently derived from this. Hence, the LXX, *ἡγεμονικῶ πνεύματι*; Jerome, *potenti spiritu*. The expression here, as well as the similar expression in verse 10, "a steadfast spirit," refers immediately to the spirit of man, but to that spirit as influenced and guided by the Spirit of God. That mechanical distinction which is sometimes made in theology, is not made in Scripture. The use of *πνεῦμα* in the New Testament is exactly analogous. See the notes of Alford and Ellicott on *πνεῦμα δειλίας*, in 2 Tim. i. 7; and comp. Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6. Luther somewhere strikingly illustrates this close and intimate union of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man, by saying that the latter, under the influence of the former, is like water heated by fire.

- III. 13 So will I teach transgressors thy ways,  
 And sinners shall return unto thee.
- 14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of  
 my salvation ;  
 My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
- 15 O Lord, open thou my lips,  
 And my mouth shall declare thy praise.
- 16 For thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it ;  
 (In) burnt-offering thou hast no pleasure :

13. With a conscience set free from guilt, with a heart renewed by the Spirit of God, and full of thankfulness for God's great mercy, he cannot keep silent, but will seek to turn other sinners to God. The thirty-second Psalm, which was probably written after this (see introduction to that Psalm), shows us how this resolution was kept.

SO WILL I TEACH; or, "So let me teach." The form is optative, and expresses that which he desires to do, as an evidence of his gratitude, and as knowing how greatly his sin must have been a stumbling-block to others. Terrible had been the fruit of his sin, not only in the wasting of his own soul, but in the injury done to others. Terrible was his punishment in witnessing this; and therefore the more anxious is he, though he cannot undo his own sin, to heal the breach, and repair the evil of sin in other souls.

THY WAYS, i.e. the ways of God's commandments, in which he would have men walk. Comp. xviii. 21 [22].

14. BLOOD-GUILTINESS; lit. "bloods." the plural of this word being used to denote blood *shed*, murder. Comp. Gen. iv. 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood," etc. Here, too, the blood of Uriah, whom he had slain, seems to cry against David for punishment. See 2 Sam. ix. 10. The repetition of the divine name which follows is not due to emphasis (as Calvin thinks), but is a peculiarity of this book of the Psalter. See note on xlv. 7.

THY RIGHTEOUSNESS. Why is this

attribute of God especially mentioned as the subject of praise? Surely not in that vague sense in which Hupfeld puts it, "as the principle of God's government," but with especial reference to the forgiveness of sins. The righteousness of God is that attribute according to which he gives to every one his own, — to those who with repentance and faith turn to him, the forgiveness which they ask, and which he has *promised* to bestow. Hence St. John says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and *just* (or *righteous*) to forgive us our sins."

15. OPEN MY LIPS. His lips had been sealed by sin, but God, by his free forgiveness, would give him fresh cause of rejoicing, and so would open them. Calvin compares xl. 4, where the Psalmist says that God had put a new song in his mouth. David thus prays God to be gracious, that he may be the loud herald of that grace to others: "My mouth shall declare," etc.

16. FOR, as expressing the reason why he will offer to God the *spiritual* offering of thanksgiving, a grateful heart and grateful lips.

SACRIFICE . . . BURNT-OFFERING. In what sense God is said to reject them is clear from xl. 6 [7]; l. 7 [8], where see notes. The Rabbinical interpreters suppose *sin-offerings* to be meant, and think that these are here set aside, because for a sin like David's, done with a high hand, no sacrifice, but only repentance, could avail. But the words here employed in reference to sacrifices are never used of *sin-offerings*, but always of

- 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,  
A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not  
despise.
- 18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion :  
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19 Then thou shalt delight in sacrifices of righteousness,  
In burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering ;  
Then shall bullocks be offered upon thine altar.

*thank-offerings*, and this sense is plainly required by the context.

17. THE SACRIFICES OF GOD, i.e. those in which he really has pleasure, are A BROKEN HEART. Another evidence of a deep sense of sin, and of a tender conscience. When speaking of *thankfulness*, we might have expected him to say, "a *joyful* heart, or a thankful heart," but instead of that he says, "a contrite heart." For the joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin: this will still continue. And the deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heart-felt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart, is therefore the best thank-offering.

18, 19. The Psalm concludes with a prayer (not as before for the individual) for the nation at large. After careful weighing all that has been urged by Hengstenberg and others in support of the genuineness of these verses, I cannot think that they formed any part of the Psalm as originally written. To me, they bear evident marks of having been added at a date subsequent to the Exile. [Otherwise, the whole Psalm must be of that date.] The prayer, "build thou the walls of Jerusalem," is certainly most naturally explicable with reference to the ruinous condition of the city after the captivity. Some suppose, indeed, that the walls were not yet completed in David's time, or that the allusion is to the walls of the Temple; others, that the expression is used in a figurative

sense of God's protection and favor, as vouchsafed to the people (see the introduction to the Psalm), but these are not natural or satisfactory interpretations. Again, verse 19 seems to have been added expressly to correct wrong inferences which might possibly have been drawn from verses 16, 17, as to the worth of sacrifices as enjoined by the law. We need not, indeed, push this so far as to suppose that the last verses *contradict* the sentiment of the former part of the Psalm. For as the sacrifice in which God delights not (ver. 16) means one not offered with a true heart, so those sacrifices in which it is said he will delight when the walls of Jerusalem are built, are expressly said to be sacrifices of righteousness, offered therefore with right motives; still there is, I think, a difference of *importance* attached to the ceremonial sacrifices, in the two passages. On these grounds, then, I regard the two concluding verses as having been added shortly after the return from exile, a time when every effort was made to rouse the people whose heart had grown cold to a sense of the value of the Temple services, and the appointed worship of Jehovah. On this point I have said more in an article on the Prophet Zechariah, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

19. SACRIFICES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, i.e. such as God would accept, because offered in righteousness, from a heart right with God, and not merely in external compliance with the law. See note on iv. 7 [8].

<sup>a</sup> הִרְבֵּה. The K'ri הִרְבֵּה is imper. apoc. Hiphil for הִרְבֵּה, as תִּרְבֶּה, xxxvii. 8, for הִרְבֵּה, and consequently the constr. is that of the double



imperative, without the copula (Gesen. § 142, 3 *b*). Hence the K'thibh is usually supposed to be the full form of the imperative. It may, however, be the infin. absol. used adverbially, like הֵיטֵב (Gesen. § 128, 2). So Hengstenberg, Hitzig, and Hupfeld.

<sup>b</sup> בְּרָרָה. Apparently Inf. Kal after the analogy of בִּשְׂפָתָהּ, but not occurring elsewhere, this verb being found in the Kal only in the participle.

<sup>c</sup> טְהוֹר, only here and Job xxxviii. 36, not as the Chald. and Rabb. "the reins," as if so called from טוֹר, "to cover, to smear," the reins being covered with fat; but as the older translators, LXX, ἀδελὰ; Jerome, *abscondita*, "the hidden depths of the heart," which agrees with the parallelism; J. H. Michaelis, *in intimis animi recessibus*. Comp. ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, Rom. ii. 29.

## PSALM LII.

THIS Psalm is not a prayer or complaint addressed to God against the oppression of the wicked; it is a stern upbraiding addressed to the man who, unscrupulous in the exercise of his power, and proud of his wealth (ver. 9), finds his delight in all the arts of the practised liar. It is a lofty challenge, a defiance conceived in the spirit of David when he went forth to meet the champion of Gath. The calm courage of faith breathes in every word. There is no fear, no trembling, no doubt, as to the end which will come upon the tyrant. How vain is his boast in presence of the loving-kindness of God, which protects his people; in presence of the power of God, which uproots the oppressor! Such is briefly the purport of the Psalm. Whether it was really composed by David on the occasion to which the title refers it, may be a matter of doubt. We know too little of Doeg to be able to say if the description in verses 1-4 applies to him or not. Nor, in fact, does the title intimate that he is the subject of the Psalm. It only points out the occasion on which the Psalm was written, and Saul's name is mentioned in it as well as Doeg's. So far Hengstenberg is right. But I cannot see any force in the arguments with which he endeavors to show that the Psalm is aimed at Saul. He says: (1) The address, "Thou mighty man," is more suitable to Saul, to whom David, in his lamentation, 2 Sam. i. 19, gives the same epithet, than to Doeg, the chief herdsman of the royal flocks, who was so far from being a hero, that he was famous for nothing but the cowardly massacre of the priests, a deed which Saul's

*warriors* refused to perform. (2) The reproach of lying, in verses 1-3, does not apply to Doeg. So far as the history informs us, Doeg simply reports the *fact* that Ahimelech had received David; whereas it is Saul who falsely accuses David and the priests of plotting together against him, 1 Sam. xxii. 17. (3) Doeg would not be described as a man who trusted in the abundance of his riches, whereas Saul might, 1 Sam. xxii. 7. (4) David would not have been so incensed against Doeg, who was nothing but the tool of Saul, but his indignation would naturally have been directed against Saul, who commanded the slaughter of the priests.

But all these arguments show rather that Doeg is *not* the person against whom the Psalm is directed, than that Saul *is*. Neither the might, nor the lying, nor the trust in riches, is peculiarly applicable to Saul. Nor can we imagine that these features of his character would have been selected for animadversion at such a time, but rather the inhuman barbarity which could conceive of such an outrage, the insolent contempt of all justice which it displayed.

Whilst, therefore, the faith and courage which breathe in this Psalm are such as to incline me to think that it was written by David, and whilst there may even be an allusion, in verse 8 (see note there), to the sanctuary at Nob, I see little reason on other grounds for maintaining the accuracy of the inscription.

The Psalm scarcely admits of any formal strophical division, but the arrangement is clear and natural.

The first verse states briefly the subject of the whole; the folly, namely, of boasting in wickedness, when God's loving-kindness is the sure and abiding defence of those against whom that wickedness is directed. Then follow :

First, a description of the evil-doer, who, in this instance, is portrayed as an habitual and practised liar (ver. 2-4).

Next, a denouncing of God's judgment against him (ver. 5).

Then, the exultation of the righteous at his overthrow (ver. 6, 7).

And lastly, the confidence and security of the sacred poet himself, and his thankfulness to God for his goodness to him (ver. 8, 9).

[For the Precentor. A Maskil of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said to him, David came into the house of Ahimelech.]

1 WHY boasteth thou thyself in wickedness, O mighty man ?

The loving-kindness of God (endureth) continually.

1. O MIGHTY MAN. So the E.V., pointedly, "O tyrant," and the LXX, whilst the Prayer-book version has, more *ὁ δυνατὸς ἀνομίαν*. The word evidently

- 2 Destruction doth thy tongue devise,  
Like a sharp razor, working guile.
- 3 Thou lovest evil rather than good,  
Falsehood rather than to speak righteousness. [Selah.]
- 4 Thou lovest all devouring words,  
O thou deceitful tongue!
- 5 God also shall break thee down forever,  
He shall seize thee, and pluck thee out of (thy) tent,  
And root thee out of the land of the living. [Selah.]

occurs here in a bad sense; though this is the only instance of such usage. Elsewhere it is used of a hero, of one who shows his prowess and his valor in war, etc. Hence Hengstenberg and Delitzsch would retain the same meaning here. But the word means strictly, one who exercises power, might, etc., and the connection must determine how that power is exercised. The root occurs in *malam partem* in several places (Jer. ix. 2; xxiii. 10; Job xv. 25; xxxvi. 9). With this "boasting" (see x. 3) of the mighty man there is then put in brief but forcible contrast, the "loving-kindness of God," as that in which the Psalmist himself found his hope and confidence, and that which indeed rendered all such boasting vain.

CONTINUALLY; lit. "all the day," as xlii. 3 [4]; xlv. 8 [9].

2-4. It is remarkable that there follows, not the description of the bold, bad man, ruling all around him by brute force, and crushing others into submission at his will, but that of one who gains his evil end by means chiefly of unblushing, deliberate falsehood.

2. DESTRUCTION (properly, "a yawning gulf," as in v. 9 [10], where see note), the plural form, of which the singular occurs in verse 7, in a different signification, "evil desire."

SHARP; lit. "whetted." Similarly, in other passages, the tongue is compared to a sharp sword, spears and arrows, etc.

WORKING GUILF, as ci. 7, does not refer to the sharp razor (as Kimchi and others), as if that were a deceitful instrument (as we find "a deceitful bow,"

lxxviii. 57), one which wounds him who uses it, or cuts where it should not, but to the tongue, or rather, as the participle is masculine, and the noun לִשָּׁן, "tongue," feminine, to the man himself, who is as it were identified with the tongue which he employs, as again verse 4, though it is not necessary to render, "O thou that workest," etc. LXX, ὥσει ξυρδὸν ἡκ. ἐποίησας δόλον.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS, here opposed to FALSEHOOD, because by this, not only speaking the lie, but false conduct is meant, the opposite of which, therefore, is not truth merely, but righteousness.

4. DEVOURING WORDS; lit. "words of swallowing up," which accords exactly with the figures employed in v. 9 [10], "their mouth is a yawning gulf," etc., and so the LXX, well, ῥήματα καταποντισμοῦ.

O THOU DECEITFUL TONGUE! So the E.V., and so Ewald, Maurer, and many others, and I see no objection to taking this as a vocative, the tongue here being, so to speak, identified with the man, because the tongue is the member with which he works his mischief. The LXX, Syr., and Jerome (alt.) take it as an accusative, in apposition with "the devouring words" of the preceding clause, and DeWette asks how "a tongue" can be said "to love"? But, with the explanation given above, there is no difficulty; and we have the same identification of the tongue and the man in verse 2.

5. Now comes, in short and powerful contrast to the unscrupulous violence, deceit, and falsehood of the proud oppressor, the righteous judgment of God.

- 6 And (the) righteous shall see (it) and fear,  
 And over him shall they laugh (saying) :  
 7 Behold the man, who maketh not God his stronghold,  
 But hath trusted in the greatness of his riches,  
 (And) is strong in his evil desire.  
 8 But as for me, — (I am) like a green olive-tree, in the  
 house of God ;  
 I have trusted in the loving-kindness of God, (and will  
 do so) forever and ever.

The most forcible expressions are employed to describe his utter overthrow and uprooting.

Also, i.e. "in like manner," "as thou hast done, so shall it be done to thee." The law of the divine dealings is a law of retribution.

BREAK THEE DOWN, i.e. as a house is broken to pieces and laid in ruins.

SEIZE THEE, prop. as coals are taken with the tongs or the shovel.

OUT OF (THY) TENT. Some suppose the herdsman's tent of Doeg to be meant; others, the tabernacle; as if the phrase, "to pluck or tear away from the tabernacle," were equivalent to "destroying from the congregation," etc. [Hupfeld very harshly, as it seems to me, renders, "will tear thee away, that there be no tent," i.e. as he explains, "will tear away thy tent," which he endeavors to defend by Prov. xv. 25, where, however, the construction is different, as, though the same verb occurs, it governs the direct object, and is not used as here, with the preposition.]

6. SHALL SEE (IT) AND FEAR. They shall witness it with that solemn awe which must be felt by all who understand aright the judgments of God. But mingled with this fear there will be joy, — joy that the wicked one is overthrown, joy that God has executed his righteous judgment.

OVER HIM, over the wicked man thus cast down, THEY SHALL LAUGH. Such exultation, to our modern sensibilities, seems shocking, because we can hardly conceive of it, apart from the gratification of personal vindictiveness. But

there is such a thing as a righteous hatred, as a righteous scorn. There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and the oppressor, at the triumph of righteousness and truth over wrong and falsehood. This is very different from imprecating the judgments of God on the heads of the ungodly. No such imprecation occurs in this Psalm, nor is there in it any trace of personal animosity. The explanation, therefore, which has been given in the notes on xxxv. 22; xli. 10, does not apply here. Indeed, even in the New Testament, we find the exultation at the overthrow of proud and luxurious wickedness. "Rejoice over her," it is said, at the fall of Babylon, as seen in the Apocalypse, "thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her," (Rev. xviii. 20). See also xix. 1-3, where the same strain of holy triumph is repeated. The manifest difference between such a strain of sentiment, and the expression of a merely personal hatred, has been entirely overlooked by Hupfeld, in his haste to condemn Hengstenberg. A malicious joy over a prostrate foe is condemned in direct terms in the Old Testament. See Prov. xxiv. 17; Job. xxxi. 29, and compare 2 Sam. i. 19 ff.

7. The words in which the righteous express their triumph, pointing, as it were, to the fallen oppressor, and the lesson to be learned from his overthrow. His trust was in his riches (comp. xlix. 6 [7]; Prov. x. 15; xviii. 11), and his strength in his evil desire (see note on verse 2), not in God.



9 I will praise thee forever, for thou hast done (it).

And I will wait on thy name,\* for it is good,

In the presence of thy beloved.

8. In strong contrast to such a man is the character and the hope of the Psalmist himself. The tyrant shall be like a tree rooted up (ver. 5) ; I, he says, shall be like a tree ever green and ever flourishing. Both images are common in the Psalms. Comp. i. 3 ; xxxvii. 35 ; xlv. 2 [3] ; cxxviii. 3, and especially xcii. 12, 13 [13, 14] ; the olive-tree is here specially selected as a type of gladness and fruitfulness ; comp. Jer. xi. 16. Hupfeld finds the figure perplexing, because he says no trees grew even in the courts of the Temple. But not to mention that trees may have been planted in the Temple area (see on xcii. 13), there is no need, surely, to put such an interpretation upon the words. The olive is not said to be *in the house of God*, any more than in the use of a similar figure in cxxviii. 3, the olive-plants are supposed to be round about the table. Just as there it is said, "Thy children about thy table are like olive-plants," so here : "I, in the house of God, am like an olive," i.e. whilst permitted daily access to his sanctuary and presence, I

may compare myself to that tree which, in its greenness and fruitfulness, is an apt emblem of joy. This is obviously the form of the comparison, as in fact is indicated by the accents. Bishop Colenso (Part ii. pp. 274, 284) has very ingeniously suggested a particular reason for this comparison here. Assuming the correctness of the title of the Psalm, there would at this time be a sanctuary at Nob, a "house of God," or tabernacle for divine worship. Nob was the northern summit of Olivet, a mountain which derived its name from the olives and oliveyards with which it was once clothed. And hence the connection in the Psalmist's mind between "the house of God" and "the olive." Bishop Colenso refers to Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 187.

9. THOU HAST DONE. Absolutely, as in xxii. 31 [32] ; xxxvii. 5 ; the past tense, expressing the conviction of faith that his prayer has already been answered.

THY BELOVED. See xvi. 10, and note there ; and for the vow of a public thanksgiving, xxii. 25 [26].

\* אָפְקָה. Hupfeld doubts the correctness of the reading, because everywhere else with the word פָּסַח, verbs of *praising* and the like are used, such as אֹרְחָה, אֶחָלָה, אֶזְמְרָה, and also because the expression, "before thy beloved," implies that the action of the verb is something that appeals to the senses. He suggests that אֶסְפְּרָה may be the word. But a writer is not bound to adopt only current phrases ; and though the expression, "I will wait upon thy name in the presence of," etc., may not be strictly correct, yet all languages furnish instances of such inaccuracies, even in classical writers.

## PSALM LIII.

THIS Psalm is only another version of the fourteenth Psalm, from which it differs in two particulars. First, in its use of the name of God, which here is Elohim, instead of Jehovah — a peculiarity which is

characteristic of all the Psalms in the second book. Next, in the remarkable deviation, verse 5 [6], from the language of the parallel passage, in Psalm xiv. 5, 6. This deviation is remarkable, because, whilst there is a material difference in the *sense* of the two passages, very many of the same or similar *letters* occur in both. Hence it has been supposed that the one text may have been copied from a partially defaced and illegible ms. of the other; the lacunae having been conjecturally filled up by the transcriber; or that the text having been corrupted through carelessness, or perhaps at first preserved orally, rather than in writing, attempts were made to correct it, and hence the variations which now exist. But neither supposition is satisfactory. There seems to have been an intentional alteration, with a view of adapting the Psalm to different circumstances. Perhaps, as Bunsen suggests, a later poet may have wished to apply Psalm xiv. to the events of his own time, when Israel was threatened by foreign enemies, and thus have sought to encourage the people to hope for deliverance by reminding them of God's help vouchsafed in former times of trouble. In this case, verses 4, 5 [5, 6] must be taken as referring to the past, not to the future.

That of the two texts Psalm xiv. is the original, appears to me almost certain. Whilst there is some abruptness in both, the sixth verse here is unquestionably more disjointed and less obviously connected with the subject of the Psalm than the corresponding passage in Psalm xiv. Dr. Colenso's theory as to the use of the divine names obliges him to assume that this is the earlier form of the poem; but the language of verse 5 [6] is decidedly opposed to the theory; and so also is the tradition, as old as the formation of the canon, which, by assigning to Psalm xiv. its place in the first book, manifestly regarded it as the original work.

The introduction and notes to Psalm xiv. may be consulted here. In some few instances only, where it seemed desirable, additional notes have been introduced, and especially where this text differs from the other.

[For the Precentor. Upon Machalath.<sup>a</sup> A Maskil of David.]

1 THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

Corrupt and abominable are they in (their) iniquity.

There is none that doeth good.

CORRUPT, etc.; lit. "They have corrupted and made abominable." This passage differs from the parallel one in xiv., first, in the introduction of the copula, which is unnecessary, and of itself a sign of a later text; and in

- 2 God hath looked down from heaven upon the children of men,  
To see if there is any that hath understanding,  
That seeketh after God.
- 3 Every one of them is gone back ; together they have become  
corrupt ;  
There is none that doeth good, no not one.
- 4 " Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge,  
(Who) eat my people (as though) they ate bread,  
(And) call not upon God ? "
- 5 There were they in great terror, (where) no terror was,  
For God hath scattered <sup>b</sup> the bones of him that encampeth  
(against) thee.<sup>c</sup>  
Thou hast put (them) to shame ; for God hath rejected  
them.

the substitution, not very happy, of "iniquity" (*gnāvel*) for "doing" (*gn<sup>a</sup>ilah*), though this last may be compared with the very similar expression in Ezek. xvi. 52, "Thy sins which thou hast made abominable."

3. THEY HAVE BECOME CORRUPT. A different verb from that employed in verse 1, and one therefore for which a different equivalent should be found in our language; perhaps "tainted" would convey the idea. It is used strictly of *physical* corruption (the Arabic cognate in conj. viii. being used of milk which turns sour), but here, as in Job xv. 16, transferred to moral corruption.

4. HAVE, etc. . . . NO KNOWLEDGE? According to this rendering, the interrogative must cover the whole clause, and the negative belong strictly to the verb = Do they not know? i.e. Are they so senseless, so without understanding? Other renderings, however, are possible: (1) "Do they not know, acknowledge?" i.e. God, whom, according to verse 1, they deny — parallel with "They call not upon God," as in lxxix. 6; Jer. x. 25. Or, (2) "Do they not know?" absolutely, i.e. show that they have knowledge, exercise their reason, etc., as lxxiii. 22; lxxxii. 5. The older versions take the word thus absolutely, but render it

as a future. LXX, οὐχὶ γνώσονται; Jerome and Vulgate, *Nonne cognoscent?* (3) Hupfeld renders, "Haben sie es nicht erfahren?" i.e. "Have they not gained knowledge," by experience of the past, sufficient to deter them from their madness?

WHO EAT, etc. These words are very difficult, and are again capable of a different interpretation from that given in the note on xiv. As is there said, the literal rendering is, "Eating my people, they have eaten bread, they have not called on Jehovah." This may be explained, "Whilst they devour my people (comp. Jer. x. 25; Lam. ii. 16), they have eaten bread," etc., i.e. "in the midst of their cruel destruction of Israel, they have gone on in their brutal security, eating and drinking, quite regardless of God or of any reverence for his name." I am now inclined, however, with L. de Dieu, to refer the words, "Who eat my people," to the first member of the verse: "Have the workers of iniquity, who devour my people, no knowledge? They eat bread (they live their careless life of self-enjoyment), they call not upon Jehovah" (do not acknowledge or fear him).

5. THERE, as if pointing to the scene see on lxvi. 6.

6 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!

When God bringeth back the captivity of his people,

(Then) may Jacob exult, (then) may Israel be glad.

WHERE NO TERROR WAS. These words are not in Ps. xiv., and are somewhat difficult to explain. Do they mean, No terror *within*, or no terror *without*? Taken with what follows, and supposing the Psalm to have been adapted to some such occasion as the destruction of Sennacherib's army, they might mean, "suddenly, in the midst of their proud security, when *they were free from all apprehension*, they were smitten with terror." Others understand it of *external* occasion of terror. They were

seized with a sudden panic, where there was really *no object to occasion alarm*. The words may perhaps be a later gloss. As we do not know for what occasion the alteration was made in the text, their interpretation must remain obscure. The other variations of the present text will be found in the Critical Note.

HATH SCATTERED, i.e. on the field of battle, or around the walls of the city, there to whiten in the sun and rain (comp. cxli. 7; Ezek. vi. 5; Jer. viii. 2), instead of being interred.

<sup>a</sup> עַל מַחֲלָה. The words occur again in the title of Psalm lxxxviii., with the addition of לְעִנּוּת (from עָנָה, "to sing," Isa. xxvii. 2). What they mean is uncertain. מַחֲלָה is "sickness," and as the word is here in the stat. constr., it would seem as if we had only part of a sentence, the rest being understood. עַל would then, as usual, denote "after the manner of," and מַחֲלָה be the first word of the song to whose melody this was to be set. It might, perhaps, begin, as Delitzsch suggests, מַחֲלָה לֵב, or something of the kind. The word may, however, be in the stat. absol., with the rarer feminine termination *-ath*. Comp. נְגִינָה, lxi. 1. Possibly it may mean that the Psalm was to be sung in a sad, mournful tone, as the addition of the verb in lxxxviii. 1, and the whole character of that Psalm, which is the darkest in the Psalter, seem to imply.

<sup>b</sup> The variations here from Psalm xiv. are as follow: פִּזַּר corresponds to מִחֲסָרוֹ, מִיָּשׁוּר to הַבִּישָׁה, עָנָה to עֲצָמוֹת חָק, בָּרוּר to מִחֲסָרוֹ. There is, therefore, a great similarity of *letters*, in the two texts, though the *words* and the *sense* are widely different.

<sup>c</sup> חֲנִיָּה, pausal form, and with omission of the prepos. instead of עָלֶיהָ, on the same principle as קָמִים עָלַי, for instance, stands for קָמִי; or perhaps the verb of *encamping* may follow the construction of verbs of dwelling, and so take the accusative directly after it.

## PSALM LIV.

THIS Psalm, like several others of the Psalms ascribed to David in the second book, refers, according to the title, to the time of his persecution by Saul. The particular occasion was this. David had taken



refuge with six hundred men in the fastness of Keilah; but, warned by Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, that the men of Keilah were not to be trusted, he escaped into the wilderness of Ziph. Here, however, he was very near falling into the hands of the Ziphites, who would have betrayed him to Saul, when happily an irruption of the Philistines into the country compelled the king to desist from his pursuit, and to turn his arms in another direction. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, and the additional particulars furnished by the later annalist, 1 Sam. xxvi. 1, from which sources the title is borrowed.

The language of the Psalm is, however, of so general a character, that it might have been composed under almost any circumstances of peril. Even the epithet “strangers” applied to the Psalmist’s enemies, verse 3 [5], does not necessarily refer to foreign enemies, as De Wette supposes. See note on the verse.

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions:

I. A prayer to God to hear and to judge the cause of his servant, together with the reason for this prayer in the violence and unscrupulousness of the enemies who beset him (ver. 1–3).

II. The confident assurance that God will hear his prayer, and the promise and vow of thanksgiving for God’s goodness which is thus anticipated (ver. 4–7).

[For the Precentor. With Stringed Instruments.\* A Maskil of David; when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?]

1 O God, by thy name save me,

And in thy might judge my cause.

2 O God, hear my prayer;

Give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers<sup>b</sup> have risen up against me,

And violent men have sought after my soul;

They have not set God before them. [Selah.]

1. BY THY NAME. See above on xx. 1.

3. STRANGERS . . . VIOLENT MEN. Supposing the inscription of the Psalm to be correct, the enemies thus spoken of would be the Ziphites. As they belonged to Judah, the word *strangers* seems to be used with special bitterness. But the epithet would seem still more appli-

cable to the men of Keilah, whom David had rescued from the Philistines, and who so basely requited his generous assistance. Their hostility to David, probably, was the result rather of a selfish regard to their own interests than of any affection or loyalty to Saul. They could never have doubted on which side

4 Behold, God is my helper,

The Lord is the upholder of my soul.

5 He will requite the evil to mine adversaries :

Destroy thou them in thy truth.

6 With free will will I sacrifice to thee ;

I will give thanks to thy name, O Jehovah, for it is good.

7 For out of all distress hath he delivered me,

And mine eye hath seen (its desire) upon mine enemies.

lay justice and right ; but because they were wicked men, "who did not set God before them," they took pleasure in hunting down one whose only fault was that he was the king's enemy. The word "strangers" may mean only enemies, the idea of a foreigner, one of another country, passing over readily into the idea of an enemy, just as in Latin *hostis* meant originally nothing more than *hospes*. Here, however, the epithet may be employed to denote the savageness and cruelty of these men, as Calvin: "Mihi videtur immanem eorum barbariem perstringere."

4. But though *men* were against him, David knew that God was with him.

THE UPHOLDER OF MY SOUL; lit. "among them," or, "with them that uphold my soul." But this would not convey the meaning of the Psalmist. For God is not to him one out of many helpers, but the only true helper. The use of the plural denotes the *class* or category of upholders, in which God is, though of course without placing him on a level with human helpers. See the same grammatical figure in cxviii. 7; Judges xi. 35.

6. WITH FREE WILL, or, with glad, willing heart, as the expression occurs in Num. xv. 3, and (without the preposition) in Hosea xiv. 5. This explains the motive of the sacrifice. The offering would be a literal offering, as appointed

by the law; but it would be brought with all the cheerfulness and love of a thankful heart, not under the compulsion of a vow, or in mere slavish compliance with an established ritual. Hupfeld suggests that the word (נָדָבָה) here may mean not "free will," but "free-will offering," because of the verb "sacrifice" which accompanies it. But he remarks, the verb is not construed with the preposition, as here, but takes the accusative of the thing offered. And I see no reason for departing from the interpretation which has the support of all the ancient versions, and is generally received.

THY NAME, . . . FOR IT IS GOOD. With reference to verse 1, "By *thy name* save me." It is possible that in the next verse the name of God is the subject of the verb, so that we may render, "It hath delivered me." If so, this passage (and Isa. xxx. 27) would come very near the later rabbinic usage, according to which "the name" (הַשֵּׁם) is constantly put for God himself. The original passage is Lev. xxiv. 11.

7. The perfects in this verse denote not that the deliverance is already accomplished, but the confidence of faith that it will be, and give the reason for the thanksgiving of the preceding verse.

MINE EYE HATH SEEN. See note on xli. 10.

<sup>a</sup> For the title, see notes on the titles of iv. and xxxii.

<sup>b</sup> זָרִים. Instead of this, many of Kennicott's and De Rossi's mss. have זָרִים, which was the reading also of the Chald., and was probably borrowed from lxxxvi. 14.

## PSALM LV.

As this Psalm is in the title ascribed to David, and as it contains a bitter complaint of the faithlessness of a trusted friend, it has been commonly supposed to refer to the desertion and treachery of Ahithophel in Absalom's rebellion. We know too little of Ahithophel to be able to say whether he was the close personal friend of the king, as well as his councillor of state. But the prayer of David (2 Sam. xv. 31) when he was told that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, "O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," is very different from the general tone of this Psalm. Here, throughout, there is a sense of personal wrong; the treachery is without excuse. And if Blunt is right in supposing that Bathsheba was the granddaughter of Ahithophel (*Undesigned Coincidences*, p. 147, Am. ed. p. 144), and that he, in revenge for the insult to his family, had espoused the cause of Absalom, David could hardly complain of his desertion. His own conscience must have told him how well-merited it was. He could scarcely upbraid the man whom he had so wronged with treachery to himself, though he might pray that his counsel should not prosper. There is another objection to the view that Ahithophel is aimed at in the Psalm. The writer of the Psalm is evidently *in the city* (no doubt Jerusalem is meant, comp. ver. 14), surrounded by evil men, but especially cognizant of the perfidy of his trusted friend. If David, therefore, wrote the Psalm, he must have written it before he left Jerusalem, and the treachery of Ahithophel must have been already unmasked. But, according to 2 Sam. xv. 30, it was not till David had begun his flight that he was told that Ahithophel had joined the conspirators. The Psalm seems, therefore, to have been composed under other circumstances, and to be directed at some person of whom we know nothing beyond what the Psalm itself tells us. Hitzig thinks it was written by Jeremiah, and discovers certain similarities of expression between the prophet and the Psalmist to justify his view. According to him, Pashur is the friend whose treachery is stigmatized. Ewald supposes the Psalm to have been written during the last century before the captivity — the discord and confusion of the city, as here described, according best with that period; and he infers from ver. 10 [11], that the city was in a state of siege. This interpretation of the verse, however, is doubtful. See note on the verse. Such conjectures, after all, are of little value. One thing only is certain, and that is, that whoever the hollow friend may have been, who knew so

well to cloak his treacherous designs, — who with war in his heart could use words smoother than oil, — his perfidy was very deeply felt, and very bitterly resented by the man who here records it. At one moment sadness, at another indignation, prevails. In his sadness, the Psalmist would flee away, and so escape the suffering and the recollection of his wrong. In his burning indignation at the black perfidy of which he had been made the victim, he would have the earth open her mouth and swallow up the faithless friend, together with all his accomplices.

The abruptness in many parts of the Psalm is to be accounted for, to a great extent, by the strong emotion under which it was written; and the transposition of verses, in order to soften this abruptness, is a violent remedy to apply, especially to these ancient compositions, which are so commonly wanting in anything like regularity of structure.

The Psalm consists of three principal divisions:

I. The first contains the earnest appeal to God against his enemies, the expression of his suffering, and the horror of mind which has come upon him, together with the longing to escape from the hostility to which he was exposed, and the evil he was compelled to witness (ver. 1–8).

II. In the next his tone changes. The portentous wickedness which has filled the whole city, and worse even than this, the perfidy of the man he had trusted, rouse his indignation, and he prays that all the counsels of the wicked may be brought to naught, and that they themselves may go down alive into the grave (ver. 9–15).

III. The last strophe is altogether in a calmer strain. It opens and closes with the confession of trust in God; and though the figure of the traitor again comes prominently into view, it does not provoke the same burning imprecation as before. Instead of this, the Psalmist rests calmly confident that the righteous shall never be moved, and that the bloodthirsty and deceitful man shall speedily be cut off (ver. 16–23).

[For the Precentor. On Stringed Instruments.<sup>a</sup> A Maskil of David.]

I. 1 GIVE ear, O God, to my prayer,

And hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Hearken unto me, and answer me;

I am tossed to and fro<sup>b</sup> in my complaint, and must groan,<sup>c</sup>

3 Because of the voice of the enemy,

Because of the oppression<sup>d</sup> of the wicked;

For they cast<sup>e</sup> iniquity upon me,

And in anger do they withstand me.



- 4 My heart is sore pained within me,  
And terrors of death have fallen upon me :  
5 Fear and trembling come upon me,  
And horror hath overwhelmed me.  
6 And I said : Oh that I had wings like the dove,  
Then would I fly (away) and be at rest ;  
7 Lo, then would I flee afar off,  
I would lodge in the wilderness : [Selah.]  
8 Quickly would I find a place of shelter  
From stormy<sup>f</sup> wind (and) from tempest.

II. 9 Confound, O Lord, divide their tongues ;  
For I have seen violence and strife in the city :

5. HORROR. The word so rendered is of comparatively rare occurrence. The LXX here explain it by *σκότος* ; Aq., *εἰληδῆσις* ; Symm., *φρίκη*. It is to be found only in three other places : Job xxi. 6 ; Isa. xxi. 4 ; Ezek. vii. 18.

6. BE AT REST ; lit. "dwell, abide," i.e. have some fixed and settled place of abode, where I should be free from persecution, instead of leading a wandering life, exposed to peril, and at the mercy of my enemies. The verb seems to have a like force in Prov. vii. 11 ; Nah. iii. 18. So the LXX, *πετασθήσομαι καὶ καταπαύσω*. It would, however, be possible to adhere to the literal rendering of the word : "Then would I fly away and dwell (somewhere)." Symm., *πετασθῆναι καὶ ἐδρασθῆναι*.

8. This verse will admit of a different rendering in both its clauses :

I would hasten my escape

Swifter than stormy wind, (and) than tempest.

In the first clause the word *miphlat* (occurring only here) may mean, according to its form, either the escape itself (Aq. and Theod., *διασωσμόν* ; Symm., *ἐκφυξιν*), or the place to which the escape is made. And, in the second, the prepos. may mean either "from," or be used in comparison, as it often is. Maurer, Hupfeld, and others think that a comparison is here implied, to mark the exceeding swiftness of the flight, which would be

more rapid than that of the storm (as Virgil has, *ocior Euro*). And Drusius says : "Nubes et venti celerrime feruntur ; sed nihil celerius vento, e depressa nube contorto. Hinc proverbium : turbine celerius, quo rei festinatae summa celeritas significatur." But I agree with Bunsen in thinking such a comparison here extremely unsuitable. In fact, not only the swift flight, and the distant flight, but the flight to a shelter *from* the storm, is what the context seems to require. (Comp. lxxxi. 15 [16] ; Jer. xxiii. 19 ; xxx. 23.) And so all the older versions : Aq. and Theod., *ἀπὸ πνεύματος λαίλαπδους*, *ἀπὸ λαίλαπος* ; Symm., *ἀπὸ πνεύματος ἐπαίροντος λαίλαπος* ; Jerome, *a spiritu tempestatis et turbinis*.

9. The tone of sadness and melancholy now gives way to one of hot and passionate indignation. He would have escaped if he could from that city of sinners, who vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their ungodly deeds ; but as he could not do this, he would gladly see God's judgments executed upon them. The sudden outburst of these fervent, impetuous feelings, gives an irregularity to the whole poem. But this is natural ; and there is no need to suppose that its parts have been disarranged, and that the order should be restored by placing verses 12-14, and 20, 21, immediately after verse 5.

CONFOUND ; or, "frustrate" (as in

- 10 Day and night, they go about it upon the walls thereof;  
Iniquity also and mischief are in the midst of it.
- 11 Destruction is in the midst of it;  
Deceit and guile depart not from the market-place thereof.
- 12 —For it is not an enemy that reproacheth me;  
Then I might bear it:  
Neither is it he that hated me, that hath magnified himself against me;  
Then I would hide myself from him.
- 13 But thou art a man, mine equal,<sup>g</sup>  
My familiar and well-known friend;
- 14 We were wont to take sweet counsel together,  
To walk to the house of God among the (festal) crowd.<sup>h</sup>

Isa. xix. 3, "I will frustrate, or, bring to naught, its counsel"); lit. "swallow up." The LXX, καταπόντισον. It is not certain whether this verb, as well as the following, has "their tongues" for its object. According to the accents, the two clauses are distinct, and with the first some other object must be supplied, "Confound or destroy (them, i.e. the enemy)."

DIVIDE. Comp. Gen. x. 25; xi. 1-9, to which there may possibly be an allusion.

10. THEY GO ABOUT, i.e. most probably "the wicked," mentioned verse 3, who are the subject, and hardly "violence and strife" (ver. 9) personified, as the ancient versions render, and as the Rabbinical commentators generally suppose (and with which we may compare Virgil's

"Ubique

Luctus, ubique Pavor et plurima Mortis imago").

The figure may perhaps be borrowed from sentinels keeping their watch upon the walls; others think, from besiegers watching the walls in order to find some weak point. In the former case we must render "upon," in the latter "round about the walls." But neither figure need be pressed. The walls in this clause of the verse are parallel to the interior of the city in the next clause, so that the

whole city may be represented in all its parts to be full of wickedness.

11. DESTRUCTION. See on v. 9, note,<sup>i</sup> and xxxviii. 12 [13].

MARKET, or "broad place" (πλατεία); the square or market-place near the gates, where was the general place of concourse. See on ix. 14 [15].

12. FOR gives a special reason for the prayer in verse 9, his eye falling upon one in particular among the crowd of enemies and evil-doers. This is a sufficient explanation of the use of the particle, which is often employed rather with reference to something in the mind of the speaker, than in direct logical sequence.

THEN I MIGHT BEAR IT — the verb with the copula in a subjoined sentence, as in li. 17 [18], "then (else) would I give it."

13. MINE EQUAL; lit. "According to my estimation," i.e. the estimation or worth which I put upon him. But such a sense does not apply here. It must rather mean "of the same rank and position as myself." LXX, ισόψυχε; Symm., δμότροπος; Jerome, unanimis, as understanding it rather of similarity of mind and character than of rank. See more in the Critical Note.

14. WE WERE WONT, etc. The verb is in the imperfect (or future, as it is

15 Let death come suddenly<sup>i</sup> upon them ;

Let them go down to the unseen world alive ;

For wickedness is in their dwelling, in the midst of them.

III. 16 As for me, unto God will I cry,

And Jehovah will save me ;

17 Evening and morning and at noon will I complain and groan,

And he shall hear my voice.

18 He hath redeemed my soul, in peace, from the battle in which I was ;

For many were against me.

19 God shall hear (me), and humble them<sup>k</sup>—

And he sitteth (as Judge) of old — [Selah.]

Who have no changes,<sup>l</sup> and who fear not God.

commonly called). Lit. "We were wont to make (our) counsel, or confidential intercourse, sweet." The word which is here rendered "counsel," is rendered "secret" in xxv. 14, where see note. In both passages the meaning "close, intimate intercourse" would be suitable. Symm. and Aq. have respectively the same rendering here, as there, of the word. This clause speaks of private intimacy, the next of association in public acts, and especially in the great festivals and processions to the Temple.

THE CROWD, here the festal caravan; comp. xlii. 4 [5].

15. Again indignation at the blackness of this treachery, so far worse to be endured than any open enmity. To have trusted, and to find his trust betrayed; to have been one with a man in public and in private, bound to him by personal ties and by the ties of religion, and then to find honor, faith, and affection all cast to the winds,—this it was that seemed so terrible; this it was that called for the withering curse. Thus the second strophe ends as it began (ver. 9), with imprecations upon the wicked; the intervening stanzas, in describing the faithlessness of the trusted friend, giving the reason for this anathema.

LET THEM GO DOWN. Comp. ix. 17 [18]. ALIVE, as Prov. i. 12. There may possibly be an allusion to the fate of Korah and his company. Num. xvi. 30, etc.

16. AS FOR ME. The pronoun emphatic, in opposition to the conduct of his enemies.

17. EVENING AND MORNING, etc. The three principal parts of the day are mentioned, either as marking special times set apart for prayer, or as a poetical expression for "the whole day," "at all times," "without ceasing." Comp. v. 3 [4]; lxxxviii. 1 [2], 13 [14]; xcii. 2 [3].

COMPLAIN AND GROAN; the same words as in verse 2.

18. IN PEACE, as denoting the end of the redemption, the condition in which he was placed thereby.

MANY. Perhaps more literally, With many (or, in great numbers) were they against me. But the preposition serves here, as elsewhere, to introduce the predicate. Comp. liv. 4 [6]. AGAINST ME; lit. "with me"; but the preposition must be understood according to the context, whether it implies *help* or *opposition*. Comp. xciv. 16. In fact, its use is just that of the equivalent preposition in English and in other languages. To

- 20 He hath put forth his hands against them that were at peace with him ;  
He hath broken his covenant.
- 21 Smooth as butter<sup>m</sup> itself is his mouth ;  
But his heart is war :  
Softer are his words than oil ;  
Yet are they drawn swords.
- 22 Cast thy burden<sup>n</sup> upon Jehovah,  
And he shall sustain thee :  
He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
- 23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction :

fight *with* = to fight *against*. To be angry *with* = to be angry *against*, etc. ; the notions of *addition* and *opposition* being always closely connected.

19. An obscure verse. The first clause runs in the Hebrew, "God will hear and answer them," which, however, gives no very suitable sense, unless we suppose the sentence to be ironical. I have therefore followed the LXX, *εἰσακούσεται ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ταπεινώσει αὐτούς* (and Jerome, *humiliabit eos*), a rendering which requires only a slight change in the vowel-points. The second clause, "And he sitteth," or, "Even he who sitteth," etc., may be quasi-parenthetical. But the introduction of the *Selah* into the middle of the verse is very unusual, and not easily accounted for ; and the third clause, beginning with the relative, is by no means clear. Who are they who have no changes ? Apparently, those whom God is said to humble or chastise. And what is the meaning of the word "changes," as here used ? Many understand it of a moral change: "Who are without change of heart or reformation." But the word never occurs in this sense. It means, properly, "a change," in the sense of *succession* ; as of garments, of troops relieving guard, servants leaving work, and the like. Hence it would rather mean, in a moral sense: "They who have no cessation in their course (by being relieved guard, for instance), who

always continue and persevere in their evil life." Calvin and others understand it of *change of fortune*, i.e. "who are always prosperous"; but this, again, is not supported by usage. See more in the Critical Note.

20. The individual traitor (who had once been the trusted friend) is again prominent. And hence Hupfeld would place this and the next verse immediately after verse 14.

HIS COVENANT. Apparently not a particular covenant, solemnly made, as that between David and Jonathan, but figuratively, the covenant implied in a close friendship, of itself a holy bond, the breaking of which is a profanity.

21. SMOOTH, etc. ; lit. "Smooth are the butterinesses of his mouth," or, as Ewald well renders, "Glatt sind die Butterlippen seines Mundes." His words drop from his lips like cream, or butter.

YET THEY. The pronoun is emphatic. *They*, those very words so smooth and so fair.

22. THY BURDEN. The word occurs only here. But there are similar expressions in xxxvii. 5, "thy way"; and Prov. xvi. 3, "thy doing." See also xxii. 8 [9]. The LXX render, *ἐπὶ Κύριον τὴν μέμινάν σου*, which is evidently before the mind of St. Peter in 1 Pet. v. 7.



Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their  
days;

But as for me, I trust in thee.

23. THEM, i.e. "the bloody and de- pronoun being placed first, as in many  
ceitful men" in the next clause; the other instances. See on ix. 12.

<sup>a</sup> See note on title of Psalm iv.

<sup>b</sup> אָרָרָה, from a verb רָרָה (the Kal, not Hiphil from רָרָה), which occurs in three other passages, Gen. xxvii. 40; Jer. ii. 31; Hos. xii. 1. The meaning assigned to it by the older versions and the Rabb. is different in different places. Here the LXX have ἐλνπήθην; Symm., κατηνέχθην προσλαλῶν ἐμαντῶ; Chald., אָרָרָה, *murmuro*. Later commentators follow Schultens and Schröder in referring it to the Arab. root وَاغَى, *vagari, discurrere*. Properly, it signifies to wander restlessly, especially as homeless, without fixed abode, etc. This is probably the meaning in Gen. xxvii. 40, "when thou wanderest," i.e. becomest a free nomad people (not as in the E. V., "when thou shalt have the dominion.") Here it is used of the restless tossing to and fro of the mind, filled with cares and anxieties.

<sup>c</sup> אָרָרָה, from a form רוּחַ, kindred with הָמָה, הָמָה; properly used of any deep confused sound; as the noise of a multitude, Micah ii. 12, as also the kindred roots are, of the roaring of the sea, the growl of a bear, etc. LXX, ἐταράχθην; Symm., συνεχύθην; Chald., אָרָרָה. The optat. or cohortative conveys the notion of "must," "am obliged to," etc. Ewald, § 228, a.

<sup>d</sup> אָרָרָה. The word only occurs here, but is common in Aram. from a root אָרָרָה, which is also found in Hebrew, Amos ii. 13, and the deriv. מִיִּצְחָק, lxvi. 11.

<sup>e</sup> רָמַיְמוּ. The Hiph. occurs only here and cxl. 10, K'thíbh, lit. "they cause to move, set in motion," as it were, a stone which they would bring down upon his head. So Symm., ἐπέρριψαν κατ' ἐμοῦ; LXX, ἐξέκλιναν ἐπ' ἐμέ.

<sup>f</sup> סָעָה occurs nowhere else. Rashi refers it to the root נָסַע, *to move away*; A. Schultens, who is followed by Gesen., would connect it with the Arab. سَعَى. Hupfeld rejects the word, and thinks it is a mistake for סָפָה, "which occurs with סָפָה, lxxxiii. 16, and in several other places.

<sup>g</sup> סָפָרָה. The easiest way of explaining this, as Hupfeld says, is by taking סָפָרָה here, as in Ex. xl. 23; Judges xvii. 10, to mean "rank, order." So Calvin, *secundum ordinem meum*. Others explain it by

reference to the phrase **אִישׁ כְּעֵרְבוֹ**, 2 Kings xii. 5; xxiii. 35, etc., “each one as he is valued, or assessed,” “every one according to his taxation” (as the latter passage is rendered in the E. V.) Hence here, “a man who is assessed as I am,” and therefore “of the same rank,” etc. But the idea of equality is, in fact, in the root itself. Comp. Isa. xl. 18, and see note on Ps. xl. 5.

<sup>h</sup> **רָנַשׁ** only here, but the form **רָנְשָׁה** occurs lxiv. 3, where there is the same antithesis as here with **סוּר**. The word is used of public festal processions, = **הַמִּזְוֶה** and **סָה**, xlii. 5.

<sup>i</sup> **רְשִׁימוֹת**, “desolations,” from **רָשַׁם**, kindred with **שָׁמַם**; but according to the K’ri, which is more probable, **רָשִׁי** (**רָשִׁיאַ**) **מָוֶת**, “let death deceive,” i.e. let death come deceitfully, unawares upon them, steal upon them, — the notion of *coming* lying not in the verb, but in the prep. **עַל**. This last is the reading of the majority of the mss., and amongst them, of the best Spanish mss. (De Rossi). Symm., *αἰφνιδίως θάνατος ἐπέλθοι αὐτοῖς*; the LXX, *ἐλθέτω θάνατος ἐπ’ αὐτούς*.

<sup>k</sup> **רִעְנָם**. There is manifestly some error in the text. Either the punctuation of the word, or the suffix, is wrong. Hupfeld observes, that after the verb **שָׁמַע** we should naturally expect **עֲנֵה**, in the sense “to answer,” this being the usual collocation of the two verbs “hear and answer”; but in that case the suffix must be wrong. It should be **רִעְנֵנִי**, “God will hear and answer *me*.” This seems an easy correction, but it occasions another difficulty; the relative **אֲשֶׁר**, in the last member of the verse, with the *plural* suffix following, and the plural verb, has now nothing to refer to. And accordingly, Hupfeld transposes the last clause of this verse to the end of verse 15 [16]. “Wickedness is in the midst of them who have no changes,” etc. But we may retain the suffix and slightly alter the punctuation, **רִעְנָם**, and this is the reading which the older versions seem to have had, the verb **עֲנֵה** in the Piel having the meaning “to chastise, afflict,” etc. The words that follow, **וְיִשָּׁב קָרָם**, are then in a measure, parenthetical; the **וְ** is here explanatory, = **וְהוּא**, as in vii. 9 [10]; xxii. 28 [29]. “And it is he,” or, “for he,” etc. The verb **יִשָּׁב** is used here of God’s session as Judge or King; comp. xxix. 9 [10]. Similarly in Latin, *sedere*, Phaedr. i. 10, 6, and *Consedere duces*, of judges on the bench, Ovid, *Meta.* xiii. 1. Comp. Juvenal, *Sat.* vii. 115.

<sup>l</sup> **הַלְיָפוֹת**. The usual interpretations of this word have already been given in the note on the verse in which it occurs. But, it must be confessed, the sense is in no case very satisfactory, whichever way we take it. Hence A. Schultens would refer the word to an Arab. root **حَلَفَ**, “covenant,” “oath,” and also “faithfulness” in keeping the same. The

meaning would then be, "men to whom oaths are of no account," or, "men who have no faithfulness." Aq. has οἷς οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλαγὰὶ αὐτοῖς; Symm., οὐ γὰρ ἀλλάσσονται; and another Greek translator, ὅτι ὁ δόλος (perhaps he read אָנִי, but Field suggests ὅτι οὐδ' ὅλως) ἀντάλλαγμα αὐτοῖς; LXX, οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἀντάλλαγμα.

<sup>m</sup> מִחֲמָאוֹת, a plural noun formed with מ from the simpler חֲמָאָה, after the analogy of such forms as מִנְחָמִים, מִחֲמָדִים, and מִחֲמָדִים (from חָמַד), מִנְחָמִים, מִנְחָמִים, and the like; not, however, plur. absol., but constr. (notwithstanding the Kametz), as is usual in words whose 3d radical is Aleph, as, for instance, מוֹצֵאִי, מְקַרְאִי, etc., and even in other forms (Gesen. *Lehrgr.* § 130, Obs. 1). Ewald, well, "Butterlippen," and other German translators, "Butterworte." The reading מִחֲמָאוֹת in the comparative sense, "(smoother) *than* butter," which is that of the Chald., Symm., and Jerome, in order to suit the parallelism מִשְׁמָנִי, introduces a double anomaly, (1) the incorrect plural מִחֲמָאוֹת, and (2) a plural verb with a singular nominative, פָּרִי. It would be far better to read, with Dathe, מִחֲמָאָה.

<sup>n</sup> יִרְחֶבֶה, only here. In the Talmud the word has the meaning "burden," and so it is commonly taken here from יָרַב or יָרַבָּ. Hupfeld thinks it is the perfect of the verb, with omission of the relative, "(that which) he, i.e. God, hath given thee."

## PSALM LVI.

THE complaint of one who, though hard pressed by enemies, nevertheless trusts in God, rests in his promises, flees to him for succor, and renders thanks for his mercy. Throughout, his confidence never forsakes him. Indeed we see here the victory rather than the struggle of faith. Hence the refrain, with which the first and second parts conclude, "In God will I praise his word. . . . What can flesh (man) do unto me?"

According to the inscription, it was composed when David was detained in Gath by the Philistines. But on neither occasion when he visited Gath does the history inform us of any such detention. (1 Sam. xxi. 11-16, and xxvii.-xxix.) Hengstenberg, indeed, and Delitzsch suppose that some seizure or imprisonment is implied in the words he "feigned himself mad *in their hands*"; and the expression at the beginning of chap. xxii., "David therefore departed thence, and *escaped*

to the cave of Adullam," may imply that he had been subjected to some confinement. Hupfeld concludes, from the absence of anything in the history corresponding to the title of the Psalm, that the title is not to be trusted. Yet it is perhaps more likely on this very account that it rests upon some ancient tradition. A modern compiler would have endeavored to make the title square better with the history.

The Psalm falls naturally into three divisions :

The first and second scarcely differ in their subject-matter. They each contain a cry for help against enemies, and an expression of confidence in God ; the second, however, being somewhat more emphatic than the first. The first consists of verses 1-4 ; the second of verses 5-11. The Psalm then concludes (ver. 12, 13) with words of devout thankfulness.

[For the Precentor. To the tune of "The Silent Dove in far-off Lands."<sup>a</sup>  
A Michtam of David, when the Philistines laid hold on him in Gath.]

- 1 BE gracious unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up :  
All the day he, fighting, oppresseth me.
- 2 Mine adversaries would swallow (me) up all the day ;  
For many are they that fight against me proudly.
- 3 In the day that I fear, in thee do I put my trust.

1. MAN. The word used denotes man in his weakness and frailty as contrasted with God in his power and majesty.

WOULD SWALLOW ME UP ; lit. "Hath panted after me," with open mouth ready to devour me, like a wild beast, thirsting for my blood. The verb is repeated in the next verse, but without any object expressed.

2. PROUDLY ; lit. "on high," an accusative used adverbially, and not a vocative, "O thou Most High," as Aq., Jerome, the Chald., and others. There is no need to understand the word so, even in xcii. 8 [9]. In Micah vi. 6 it does not stand alone ; God is there mentioned by name : "to God on high."

3. IN THE DAY, etc. (As regards the construction, this is an accusative of time placed in construction with the finite verb instead of the infinitive, as again ver. 9 [10].) Hupfeld thinks it a manifest contradiction to say, "In the

day that I *fear* I *trust* " ; but there is no contradiction except to the narrow understanding exercising its narrowest faculty of vision. It is not even necessary to explain : "In the day when I have reason to fear, or when terror assails me," etc. Fear and trust may co-exist. Faith may vanquish the rising fear, or, with Peter sinking in the sea through fear of the winds and the waves, may only have strength to cry, Lord, save me, I perish. Trust in God does not make us cease to be men, and to have the feelings of men ; but it gives a better than any stoical calmness ; it lifts the man who is trembling in himself above the fear which assails him ; in the very midst of fear it listens to the voice which says, Fear not, for I am with thee. "Assuredly," says Calvin, "this is the true test and proof of our faith ; when fears harass us, so far as our fleshy nature is concerned (*pro sensu carnis*),



4 In God do I praise his word :

In God have I put my trust; I am not afraid :

What can flesh do unto me ?

5 All the day long they wrest my words :

All their thoughts are against me for evil.

6 They gather together, they lie in wait,<sup>b</sup> they, even they,  
watch my steps,

As<sup>c</sup> they have hoped (to take away) my life.

7 Shall they escape<sup>d</sup> because of iniquity ?

In (thine) anger bring down the peoples, O God.

but do not overthrow and unsettle our minds. It seems, indeed, as if *fear* and *hope* were feelings too contrary the one to the other to dwell in the same heart; but experience shows that hope there in fact really reigns where some portion of the heart is possessed by fear. For when the mind is calm and tranquil, hope is not exercised, yea rather is as it were hushed to sleep; but then, and not till then, does she put forth all her strength, when the mind has been cast down by cares, and she lifts it up; when it has been saddened and disturbed, and she calms it; when it has been smitten with fear, and she sustains and props it."

4. IN GOD, or perhaps "*through God*" (comp. lx. 13 [14]), i.e. by his help, trusting in him, do I praise.

HIS WORD, i.e. his promise. God himself gives me to know ever anew the truth of his promise, and therefore I make my boast of it. The promise of God, true and precious as it is, is nothing in itself, but only in God who makes it true and precious to our souls.

I DO NOT FEAR; or "I cannot fear"; for such may be the force of the tense. "But how can David thus all at once have put off all weakness, so that he who but a moment before was in dread of death, now courageously tramples upon his enemies? I answer that this confidence is no proof that he was rid of all fear, as if he were like a man placed beyond the reach of every weapon (*extra telorum jactum positus*), and could quietly

smile at all perils; but because he was so far from yielding to fear that he rose victoriously above it, and by holding up the shield of hope, and so driving back all apprehensions, was defended by a sure and certain salvation (*munitus esset certa salute*), he might well break forth with the holy boast, *Because I hope in God I will not fear.*" — Calvin.

5. The second strophe contains a fuller description of the attacks and evil designs of his enemies, and a cry to God to take vengeance upon them.

THEY WREST MY WORDS, i.e. they twist and pervert them, give them a wrong meaning, purposely misrepresent me. The expression, however, may perhaps be taken in a wider sense. "My words" may be = "my circumstances"; all that concerns me, all that I say and do, they twist, turn it into an occasion of bitterness and sorrow to me (comp. the noun "sorrows," xvi. 3 [4], from the same root). *My circumstances* may then be almost a periphrasis for *me*, and the phrase mean, "They torment me, occasion me sorrow," etc.

6. THEY, EVEN THEY. I have thus rendered the pronoun which stands here emphatically.

MY STEPS; lit. "my heels," the heels being the part exposed to any person coming from behind, or to an enemy lying like a serpent in the path. See on xlix. 5 [6]. Comp. lxxxix. 51 [52]; Job xviii. 9.

7. This verse gives vent to the stronger

8 THOU tellest my wandering ;

Oh put<sup>e</sup> thou my tears into thy bottle,<sup>f</sup>

Are they not in thy book ?

9 Then shall mine enemies be turned backward, when I call  
(upon thee) :

This<sup>g</sup> I know, that God is for me.

10 In God do I praise (his) word :<sup>h</sup>

In Jehovah do I praise (his) word.

feelings of the heart, in the prayer that those who have banded themselves in a treacherous conspiracy against the peace and life of the Psalmist may be overthrown.

SHALL THEY ESCAPE, etc. Such seems the only possible rendering of the text as it at present stands. But by a very slight change in a single consonant we should have the meaning : "Requite them according to (their) iniquity." See more in Critical Note.

THE PEOPLES. Instead of saying "mine enemies," his eye takes a wider range. These men are only a few out of many ungodly, and therefore he appeals to God as the Judge of the world to root out all ungodliness everywhere. Comp. lix. 5 [6], 8 [9], and see on vii. 7 [8].

8. As in the last Psalm we noticed the sudden transition from sadness to anger, from a tone of weariness and despondency to one of stern indignation, so here we have the contrary. For a moment the Psalmist prays for destruction upon his adversaries ; then he turns, with words of touching entreaty, to God.

MY WANDERING, perhaps "my flight, or exile." Others understand, "my (inward) restlessness." The word, however, may mean "complaint," "lamentation," etc. Comp. Job ii. 11. The word is in the singular number, perhaps, as Calvin suggests, in order to express "his whole wandering life, as though he would term it one continuous exile." The tone here is changed. The sacred poet turns from man to God with that tender, personal affection which is so striking both in this Psalm and in the

next, and which makes one willing to believe that these are, as the titles tell us, Psalms of David. He knows that each day of his wandering, each nook in which he has found shelter, each step that he has taken, every artifice by which he has baffled his foes, — all have been numbered by his Heavenly Keeper. Yea, no tear that he has shed, when his eye has been raised to heaven in prayer, has fallen to the ground. He asks God to gather them all in his bottle, and trusts that he will note them in his book. Comp. cxxxix. 16 ; lxix. 28 [29] ; Ex. xxxii. 32 ; Mal. iii. 16, in which the figure of the book occurs.

THE BOTTLE is the skin-bottle which in Eastern lands is used for keeping water, milk, wine, etc. In this he prays God, by a bold figure, to treasure his tears. The prayer is, no doubt, abrupt, coming as it does between the double expression of confidence : "Thou hast numbered," etc. "Are they not," etc. But there is no reason on this account to render, "My tears *are* put," etc. Such a turn of the sentence may seem less harsh ; but I confess I cannot understand that kind of criticism which will allow no play to the emotions of the heart, and which would bind the spirit of prayer in the withes of the rhetoricians. This verse has been beautifully imitated in P. Gerhardt's Hymn (quoted by Hupfeld) :

"Du zählst wie oft ein Christe wein',  
Und was sein Kummer sei ;  
Kein stilles Thränlein ist so klein,  
Du hebst und legst es bei."

10. The refrain is varied from verse 4, by the emphatic repetition of the first

11 In God have I put my trust ; I am not afraid :

What can man do unto me ?

12 Upon me, O God, are thy vows :

I will pay thank-offerings unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death :

Hast thou not (delivered also) my feet from stumbling

That I may walk before God in the light of life ?

clause, with the substitution, however, in its repeated form of *Jehovah* for *Elohim*. Calvin thus explains the repetition: "Though to-day God may have seemed to depart from me, because he has withdrawn his aid, still I will rest in his word. Should the same thing happen to-morrow, or the next day, I will persist in the same praise of it." He goes on to urge the importance of learning to be thus content with the bare word (*nudo verbo contenti*) in all our trials. "For though God ever furnishes believers with manifold subjects of praise and boasting in the benefits he bestows, still they can scarcely take three steps unless they have learned to lean only on the word."

12. THY VOWS, i.e. the vows which I have vowed to thee (the only instance, however, in which the pronoun refers to

God instead of to the person who makes the vow). ARE UPON ME, i.e. it is incumbent upon me to pay them, because the condition of deliverance upon which I vowed has been fulfilled. Cf. Prov. vii. 14.

13. The verb from the first clause of this verse must be repeated with the second, where the change to the question ("Hast thou not," etc.) is characteristic of the writer. See verse 8 [9].

FROM STUMBLING ; lit. "from a thrust or blow."

THAT I MAY WALK ; lit. "walk to and fro," as expressive of the general habit of the life.

IN THE LIGHT OF LIFE, or "in the light of the living," i.e. as a living man (as in Job xxxiii. 30). Comp. xxvii. 13 and the parallel passage cxvi. 8, 9, where, however, it is "land of the living."

עַל יִדְּוֹתָ א' ר'. The inscription is obscure. Some suppose that it is intended to describe David's situation as a wanderer in a strange country ; he being like the *dove* in his innocence, *silent* in his patience and defencelessness, and among the *distant* ones or strangers, i.e. the Philistines. But the prep. עַל probably here, as in the inscriptions of other Psalms, denotes merely the tune or melody of some song beginning with the words "Silent dove," etc., after the measure of which this was to be sung. See on the inscription of xxii. The word יְהִיָּם is a plur. abstr., as in lxv. 6, יָם ר', "the far-off sea." For אֵלֶם Bochart (*Hieroz.* ii. 1) would punctuate אֵלֶם, as if written defectively for אֵלִים. "terebinths," "the dove of the distant terebinths." On Michtam, see xvi. note <sup>a</sup>.

יִצְפִּירוּ. The K'ri is יִצְפִּירוּ Kal (the י being only inserted to mark the conjugation as distinct from the Hiphil), but the correction is unnecessary. The Hiphil may be used as in Ex. ii. 3 ; Job. xiv. 13, with-

out a causative signification, and there is no need to supply an object, as if it were = "they hide *nets*," or "they put in ambush *liers-in-wait*." Symm. takes this and the preceding verb יָגִיד together, and the one as modifying the other adverbially, *συνήγοντο λάθρα*, and Jerome, *congregantur abscondite*. On the meaning of גִּיד, see Gesen. *Thesaur.*, and comp. lv. 16, where Aq., Symm., and Jerome give the same signification to the noun.

<sup>c</sup> פָּאָשָׁר . Not *because* (though such a meaning may be defended by Num. xxvii. 14), nor *when*, nor *as if* (as Ewald takes it, in which case the imperf. or the infin. with פָּ would follow), but simply *as*. They are now lying in wait for me, *as* they have done in times past. Both the grammar — for the verb is in the past tense — and the accentuation, according to which the Athnach stands at the end of the clause with the two imperfects, show that this is the construction, as Hupfeld rightly observes.

<sup>d</sup> פָּלֵט-לָמוֹ . As these words stand, there are two interpretations grammatically possible. Either they are a question, "Is there escape to them (can they escape) because of iniquity?" or they express the opinion of the wicked, "They escape (as they think) because of iniquity." But both interpretations are harsh. Mendels. renders: "Umsonst sei ihr Entrinnen." He takes אֵין in its original meaning of "nothingness," and אֵין אֵל as signifying "by no means," as other adverbial ideas are expressed by the same prep. אֵל אֵינָר, "falsely," Lev. v. 22. (See other examples in Gesen. *Thesaur.* p. 1028). And so app. the LXX, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μηθενὸς σώσεις αὐτούς. The sense so obtained, "They lie in wait for me, but they themselves shall not (or let them not) escape," is unobjectionable; but there is no proof that אֵין can be used in the alleged sense. It is, therefore, better, with Ewald and Hupfeld, to read פָּלֵס, a very trifling alteration, "weigh out to them," i.e. "requite them on account of (their) iniquity."

<sup>e</sup> שִׁימָה . This, according to the accentuation, is imperative. Some, however, who think this sudden transition to the form of entreaty in the middle of the verse not easy to be accounted for, would accentuate שִׁימָה as part. pass. fem. of שִׁים, "My tears *are put*," etc. The part. occurs Num. xxiv. 21; 1 Sam. ix. 24, and in the K'thibh, 2 Sam. xiii. 32. But this is unnecessary. The LXX seem to have had a different text, τὴν ζωὴν μου ἐξήγγειλά σοι, ἔθου τὰ δάκρυά μου ἐνώπιόν σου, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ σου. Symm. renders the first clause τὰ ἔνδον μου ἐξηρβήμασας, and the second like the LXX, except ἔνδον for ἐνώπιον. Jerome has, *Secretiora mea numerasti, Pone lacrymam meam in conspectu tuo; sed non in narratione tua*. All seem to have been puzzled.



בְּנִינָהּ. The LXX, Syr., and Jerome render this as if it were בְּנִינָהּ. Hupfeld and Olsh. would get rid of the next clause 'הָלֹא ב' as a gloss, but the question only repeats, in a more emphatic form, the conviction expressed before in the first member of the verse. The word סִפְרָה occurs only here. The older interpreters for the most part, except the Syr., render it not "book" = סֵפֶר, but "numbering," "reckoning," etc.

נִי, used here apparently with a neuter meaning, instead of וְאִנִּי, as in 1 Kings xvii. 24. In what follows, אֶלְהִים לִי, the prep. is used as in cxxiv. 1, 2, "for me," i.e. on my side.

הִדְבַּר, instead of הִדְבָּר in ver. 4 [5], used here absolutely without either the article or the pron. suffix, probably because its meaning was sufficiently fixed and intelligible, especially as having already occurred in the Psalm. Aq., Symm., and Jerome, who all express the pronoun (αὐτοῦ) in the former instance, omit it here, and have simply ῥῆμα, λόγον, *verbum*. The repetition of the clause with Jehovah is also supported by the united testimony of the ancient versions, and need not therefore be treated as a gloss.

## PSALM LVII.

THIS Psalm is in many respects like the last, and, like that, was probably written by David.

Both Psalms open with the same cry to God for mercy; both are written in circumstances of no common peril (lvi. 1, 2, 5, 6; lvii. 4, 6); both are full of the same lofty trust in God, and courage in the midst of danger (lvi. 3, 4, 9-11; lvii. 1-3, 7), and of the same joy and thankfulness in the assurance of deliverance (lvi. 12, 13; lvii. 7-9). Both have even the same peculiar and characteristic expression by which the enemy is described as one ready to *swallow up* the Psalmist (lvi. 1, 2 [2, 3], and lvii. 3 [4]), and both have a double refrain at the conclusion of the two principal divisions of the Psalm. But this Psalm is written in a still more triumphant strain of holy joy than the last, and closes with a shout of exultation.

According to the title, it was written by David "when he fled from Saul in the cave"; or, as the LXX render it, "*into* the cave." The history tells us of two occasions on which David found refuge in a cave. The one cave was that of Adullam, situated in the face of the cliffs which skirt the low valley of the Philistines (1 Sam. xxii.); the

other was that of En-gedi, one of the numerous caves in the limestone rock, among the "alps" or high pastures of the district on the western bank of the Dead Sea. Hengstenberg thinks the former is meant, because the connection between this and the preceding Psalm is so close, and because, being alike in character and form, and following one another in the Psalter, they may reasonably be referred to the same time. Now Psalm lvi. was written, according to the inscription, in Gath, and therefore this was probably composed immediately afterwards, when David hid himself in the cave of Adullam. Tholuck, on the other hand, decides for En-gedi. But this is a question which must be left. There is nothing in the Psalm either for or against the title.

The Psalm consists of two parts; the conclusion of each being marked by the refrain :

I. The first contains a cry to God for mercy, together with an expression of confidence in him in the midst of enemies and dangers (ver. 1-5).

II. The second repeats briefly the story of his persecutions, and then concludes with a triumphant acknowledgment of God's goodness (ver. 6-9).

[For the Precentor. "Destroy not."\* A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul, in the Cave.]

I. 1 BE gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me ;  
     For in thee hath my soul found refuge ;<sup>b</sup>  
 And in the shadow of thy wings will I find refuge,  
     Until the destruction <sup>c</sup> be overpast.  
 2 I will call upon God Most High,  
     Upon the God who conferreth benefits <sup>d</sup> upon me.

1-5. The cleaving of the soul to God, and the trust in his power and mercy, despite all perils.

1. IN THE SHADOW OF THY WINGS. This exceedingly striking image may have been suggested by Deut. xxxii. 11. See above on Ps. xvii. 8. Still more tender is the New Testament figure, Matt. xxiii. 37. Perhaps there is nothing more remarkable in the Psalms than this ever-recurring expression of a tender personal affection on the part of the sacred poets to God. There is no parallel to this in the whole range of heathen

literature. Monsters to be feared and propitiated were the deities of paganism ; but what heathen ever loved his God ? The apotheosis of man's lusts could only produce a worship of servility and fear. The change of tense in the repeated use of the verb gives a force and beauty to the passage which is quite lost sight of when both are rendered as presents (as Ewald does). The Psalmist looks back to the past and forward to the future : In thee hath my soul found refuge ; in thee I will find refuge.

3 He shall send from heaven and save me,—

(Though) he that would swallow me up hath re-  
proached,\* [Selah] —

God shall send his loving-kindness and truth.

4 As for my life, in the midst of lions must I lie,<sup>f</sup>

(Among) those who are ready<sup>g</sup> to devour, (even) the  
children of men,

Whose teeth are spears and arrows,

And their tongue a sharp sword.

5 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God,

(And) thy glory above all the earth.

II. 6 They prepared a net for my steps ;

My soul was bowed down.<sup>h</sup>

They digged before me a pit ;

They fell into the midst thereof (themselves). [Selah.]

7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast ;

I will sing and play (upon the harp).

8 Awake up, my glory ; awake harp and lute ;

I will wake the morning dawn.<sup>i</sup>

9 I will praise thee among the peoples, O Lord,

I will play unto thee among the nations.

3. HE SHALL SEND. The verb may be used here absolutely, as in xviii. 16 [17] ; or perhaps the object may be "his loving-kindness and truth," the verb being repeated emphatically in the third member of the verse, the construction being somewhat broken by the position of the second member (see Critical Note). For the sentiment, comp. xliii. 3.

HE THAT WOULD SWALLOW ME UP. The same word which occurs in lvi. 1, 2 [2, 3], and one of the links connecting the two Psalms.

4. A SHARP SWORD. Cf. lv. 21 [22] ; lix. 7 [8] ; lxiv. 3 [4] ; Prov. xxx. 14.

5. BE THOU EXALTED, i.e. *manifest* thy glory and thy majesty in the exercise of thy universal dominion both in heaven and in earth. For this manifestation David prays ; that this will be he rests assured, and this is his comfort

when enemies assail. God's deliverance of those who trust in him is bound up with his glory ; for the wicked strike not only at the righteous, but at God himself in them. The prayer, therefore, for God's exaltation is at the same time a prayer for his own deliverance ; but it is—may we not say ?—a less selfish and a nobler prayer.

7. MY HEART IS STEADFAST, i.e. in the confidence of faith. The adjective is the same as in li. 10 [12]. So Symm. renders ἐδραία, whereas the LXX have ἐτοίμη, which has been followed by the E. V., and is no doubt admissible (see xxxviii. 17 [18]).

8. I WILL WAKE THE MORNING DAWN. The figure is at once bold and beautiful. My song shall itself awake the morning. Hengstenberg compares Ovid, *Meta.* xi. 597 : "Non vigil ales ibi cristati cantibus oris evocat auroram."

10 For great unto the heavens is thy loving-kindness,  
And unto the clouds thy truth.

11 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God,  
(And) thy glory above all the earth.

11. "Greater words of prayer than these," says Delitzsch most truly, "never came from human lips. Heaven and earth have, as they imply, a mutually interwoven history, and the blessed, glorious end of this is in the sunrise of the divine glory over both." The latter part of this Psalm is repeated at the beginning of cviii., where see notes.

<sup>a</sup> אֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם. The conjectures as to the meaning of these words here are various, and as unsatisfactory as they are various. Perhaps they were the opening words of some other poem, to the measure and melody of which this was to be sung. (Ewald, *Poet. B.* i. 173). Maurer suggests that the prayer of Moses in Deut. ix. 26 may be meant; and Hengst. thinks this is a watchword of David, based on the same passage, "Destroy not thy people," etc. On Michtam, see xvi. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> הַסֵּהָ. 3 fem. as if from a form חסה=חסה. See Gesen. § 75, Rem. 4.

<sup>c</sup> הַיּוֹתָר. A fem. plur. with a verb sing. masc. On this enallage of number, see Gesen. § 147 *a*. Some suppose that the singular verb is used distributively, "until every one of the destructions is overpast," but even then the difficulty of the gender remains. Why is the verb masculine?

<sup>d</sup> גָּמַר עָלַי; lit. "who accomplisheth concerning me," i.e. who fulfilleth his good pleasure, or what he hath promised, or what I desire, for me. The verb גָּמַר occurs only in the Psalms, and may also be used intransitively as in vii. 10; xii. 2. But it seems almost certain that it stands here for the cognate form גָּמַל (the interchange of *l* and *r* being common enough), which occurs constantly with עָלַי, xiii. 6; cxvi. 7, 12; cxlii. 8, and in a good sense means "to benefit." So the LXX here, τὸν εὐεργετήσαντά με, "my Benefactor."

<sup>e</sup> הָרָה שָׂאָפִי. The older translators make God the subject of the verb: "He hath brought reproach upon, put to shame, him that would devour me," etc. But this is contrary to all usage, according to which men are said to reproach one another and to reproach God, but God is nowhere said to reproach men. It is clear, then, that שָׂאָפִי is the subject of the verb הָרָה. But is this clause to be connected with the preceding or the following? Some would connect it as a relative clause with the foregoing: God shall... save me, even he whom my persecutor (the man who would swallow me up) hath reproached. It is however,



I think, on the whole better, notwithstanding the *Selah*, to connect this with what follows, taking the preterite הָרַק as concessive; he that would swallow me up (see note on lvi. 1) hath reproached (me), i.e. *though* he has, etc. The *Selah* in the middle of the verse is very unusual. See lv. 19 [20].

<sup>f</sup> אֲשַׁכֶּבֶה. It seems impossible to explain satisfactorily the use of the paragogic (optative) form of the verb here. It is commonly rendered as a present, as in the E. V. "I lie," but in defiance of grammar. Olsh. and others take "let me lie," here = "I am ready to lie," as an expression of bold resolve based on trust in God; but this does not cohere with the rest of the verse. Hupfeld suggests that the form here may be used to denote *external* compulsion (as the same form expresses an *internal* necessity in verbs of *lamenting*, *exulting*, etc.) = "I *must* lie." Comp. the use of the paragog. form in Isa. xxxviii. 10; Jer. iii. 25; iv. 21; vi. 10. He would, however, read שִׁכְבָּהּ to agree with the nom. נַפְשִׁי. On the other hand, for the same constr. of נַפְשִׁי prefixed to the verb in the first pers., comp. Isa. xxvi. 9.

<sup>g</sup> לִהְיוֹת, not as the Chald. and Rabb. "set on fire," "flaming," etc. (a meaning which they seem to have derived from the constant use of the root with words denoting fire, flame, etc.), but "devouring," "consuming." Aq., ἐν μέσῳ λεαινῶν κοιμηθήσομαι λάβρων; Theod., μετὰ ἀναλυσκόντων; Symm. has ἐν μέσῳ λεόντων εὐθαρσῶν ἐκοιμήθην μεταξὺ φλεγόντων, where εὐθαρσῶν may have been intended, as Mr. Bensly suggests (adopted by Field) to bring out the force of the form אֲשַׁכֶּבֶה. See note <sup>f</sup>. Jerome, "In medio leonum dormivit ferocientium." [He would seem, therefore, to have forestalled Hupfeld's emendation; see note <sup>f</sup>.] So civ. 4, אֵשׁ לִהְיוֹת, "a devouring fire," and in the verb in the Piel, lxxxiii. 15; cvi. 18; Isa. xlii. 25; Joel i. 19; ii. 3. Properly the root means, like other similar roots (comp. לָיַס), "to lick," and then "to devour," "to swallow," etc. As regards the construction, this cannot agree with לִבְאִים, as Aq. and Jerome, which is forbidden by the position of the verb between the noun and the participle, but either לִהְיוֹת must be governed by the prep. בְּתוֹךְ, "in the midst of them that devour, (even) the sons of men"; as Symm., Theodor. (see above); or it must be the predicate to בְּ, "the sons of men devour." This last, though against the accents, is perhaps the simplest construction.

<sup>h</sup> קָשָׁה. The word occurs everywhere else in a transitive meaning. Hence Böttcher would explain: It (viz. the crafty design of my foes) hath bowed down my soul. Others make the enemy himself (sing. for plur.) the subject: "He hath," etc. But it is better perhaps to assume

an indefinite subject: "One hath bowed down my soul" = "My soul is bowed down."

<sup>i</sup> שָׁחַר. The words may be rendered as in E. V. "I will wake early" (lit. "at the dawn"); for the verb, though Hiphil, is used intransitively, as in lxxiii. 20 (in fact this is the normal use of this verb); and although שָׁחַר is never used elsewhere to denote a part of time, yet it may perhaps follow the analogy of words like לִלְזָה בֶּקֶר, etc. See on cxxvii. note <sup>d</sup>.

## PSALM LVIII.

THIS Psalm is a bold protest against unrighteous judges. It opens with an indignant expostulation on their deliberate perversion of justice, whilst they pretend to uphold it. It lays bare their character and that of those whom they favor, as men thoroughly, habitually, by their very nature, corrupt. And finally, because they are thus beyond all hope of correction or amendment, it calls upon God to rob them of their power, and to bring all their counsels to nought.

The Psalm abounds in bold and striking images, and is remarkable for a nervous force of expression. The title ascribes it to David, but without assigning it to any particular occasion in his life. Various guesses have been made as to the time of its composition, but the Psalm furnishes us with no data for any certain or even probable conclusion.

It consists of three principal divisions:

I. The forcible picture of unrighteousness in the seat of judgment (ver. 1-5).

II. The swift punishment which is about to overtake these unjust judges, and for which the Psalmist prays (ver. 6-9).

III. Lastly, the joy of those who shall behold their overthrow, and who shall acknowledge that, however the name of justice may have been profaned by human judges who abuse their office, there is, nevertheless, a righteous Judge in the earth (ver. 10, 11).

[For the Precentor. "Destroy not." <sup>a</sup> A Michtam of David.]

I. 1 Do ye of a truth in silence <sup>b</sup> speak righteousness?

Do ye (with) uprightness judge the children of men?

1. IN SILENCE. They are *dumb* when they are said to be *deaf* when they ought to hear. they ought to speak, as afterwards they hear.

2 Nay, rather, in heart ye work iniquities ;

In the earth ye weigh out the violence of your hands.

3 (The) wicked are estranged<sup>c</sup> from the womb,

They go astray from their birth, speaking lies.

4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent :

(They are) like a deaf adder which stoppeth her ear,

5 Which hearkeneth not to the voice of enchanters,

(To) a charmer, charming never so wisely.

II. 6 O God, break their teeth in their mouths,

The jaw-teeth of the young lions wrench out, O Jehovah.

2. IN THE EARTH, i.e. openly, in your public administration ; opposed to the "in heart," before.

YE WEIGH OUT ; said sarcastically. Ye pretend, indeed, to hold the balance of justice, and nicely to weigh out to each his just award, but violence is the weight with which ye adjust the scales. Aq., διασταθμίζετε.

3. Those to whom the indignant question has been put cannot answer; being condemned by their own consciences, and therefore the poet goes on at once, abandoning the form of address, to give a further description of their character in the third person. Or possibly the description may apply, not to the unrighteous judges, but to the evil-doers whom they countenance and support. (So Hupfeld.)

FROM THEIR BIRTH ; lit. "from the belly." See on li. 5 [7]. The object however, here, is clearly not to insist upon the general truth of an innate depravity, but rather to mark the special character of these wicked men as men whose *whole life* has been one continuous, unchecked career of wickedness — bold, habitual, hardened transgressors, whose maturity in vice is what might be expected from their early depravity.

4, 5. Their wickedness is desperate, for they are like the adder, which the subtlest charmer cannot tame. The **ADDER** is mentioned as peculiarly dangerous. (Comp. xci. 13 ; Job xx. 14, 16 ; Deut. xxxii. 33 ; Isa. xi. 8.) The serpent-

charmers, a class of men so well known in the East, are spoken of also Jer. viii. 17 ; Eccl. x. 11. For instances of the exercise of this art, which is still in vogue, see Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. ii. chap. 20 ; Hengst. *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 99, Andover ed. p. 100, and especially the very full account, with references to authorities, both ancient and modern, given by Knobel, on Ex. vii. 11, pp. 60, 61.

5. OF ENCHANTERS, properly "whisperers." Symm., ψιθυρίζοντων ; the allusion is probably to the hissing sound by which the enchanters endeavored to draw out the serpents from their retreats.

A **CHARMER**, etc. ; lit. "one charming (with) charms," etc. (Deut. xviii. 11). Symm., ἐπαστοῦ τε ἐπωδαῖς σεσοφισμένου ; Aq., ἐπαειδεῖν ἐπαοιδὴν σεσοφισμένου.

NEVER SO WISELY ; lit. " (though) he be made wise, i.e. well versed in his art." (Comp. Isa. iii. 3.) For a like use of the participle, comp. xxxix. 5 [6]. "At his best estate" ; lit. "though standing never so fast."

6. There is an abrupt change in the image employed. As these men are incorrigible in their wickedness, as they cannot be tamed, the Psalmist prays God to destroy their power for mischief ; but instead of continuing the figure of the serpent-charmer, who robs the serpent of his poison, he suddenly represents them as young lions, whose teeth he would see broken that they may no longer devour. (Comp. iii. 7 [8]).

7 Let them melt away,<sup>d</sup> as water (which) runneth apace ;  
 (When) they shoot their arrows,<sup>e</sup> let them be as though  
 cut off.<sup>f</sup>

8 (Let them be) as a snail,<sup>g</sup> (which) melteth away<sup>h</sup> (as)  
 it goeth,  
 (Like) the untimely birth of a woman, (as those who)  
 have not beheld<sup>i</sup> the sun.

9 Before your pots<sup>k</sup> can feel (the fire of) thorns,  
 Both green and burning, they shall be whirled away.

III. 10 The righteous shall rejoice that he hath beheld (the)  
 vengeance,  
 He shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the  
 wicked ;

7. Then in a series of bold figures he draws further the picture of the destruction which he would fain see come upon them. The first is taken from water running away, and so wasted and lost (comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 14) ; the next from arrows shot, but with their points broken off and blunted, so that they fail to inflict a wound.

(WHEN) THEY SHOOT ; lit. " (When) he shooteth," the verb being in the singular. Either the singular is here used distributively = " when any one of them (the wicked) shooteth " ; or, perhaps more generally, " when one shooteth," is merely the impersonal, put, according to the Hebrew idiom, for the passive = " When their arrows are shot." Others, because the verb is in the singular, render as if God were the subject. " When he, i.e. God, shoots his arrows (at them), immediately they shall be cut down." But this is unnecessary. See more in Critical Note.

8. (WHICH) MELTETH AWAY (AS) IT GOETH ; lit. " which goeth in melting " (or slime), the noun being in the accusative as describing the nature of the action, and the allusion being to the slimy trail which the snail leaves behind it, so that *it seems* to waste away. Evidently this is nothing more than a poetical hyperbole, and need not be explained there-

fore as a popular error or a mistake in natural history.

HAVE NOT BEHELD THE SUN. Comp. Job. iii. 16.

9. The general sense of this difficult verse seems to be this : As a sudden whirlwind in the desert sweeps away the thorns which have been gathered for cooking, almost as soon as they have been set on fire, and before the caldron has grown hot (comp. Eccl. vii. 6), so shall the wicked, and all their yet incomplete designs, be swept away by the wrath of God. For the explanation of the separate words, see Critical Note.

10. On the satisfaction here expressed in the prospect of vengeance on the ungodly, see on lii. 6 [8]. Comp. lxviii. 23 [24] ; Deut. xxxii. 42, 43. This terrible vengeance was such as was not uncommonly practised in the wars of those times.

11. A REWARD ; lit. " fruit." Comp. Isa. iii. 10 ; Prov. i. 31.

THERE IS A GOD ; or, perhaps, " there is a Deity," the word Elohim being here construed with a plural participle (Ges. § 112, Rem. 3), and therefore not used so much in the personal sense, as in contrast to those false judges who call themselves " gods " but are not. This verse refers evidently to verses 1, 2, whether we adopt the reading " O ye



11 So that men shall say, Surely there is a reward for the righteous,  
Surely there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

gods" there, or not. Ewald translates *eine Gottheit richtend*, etc.; and Bunsen: "Gibt es doch Götter richtend"; Delitzsch: "Ja es gibt eine Gottheit richtend"; Bunsen: "Es gibt doch eine göttliche Gerechtigkeit auf Erden."

<sup>a</sup> See lvii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> אָלִים. The word, according to its present punctuation, means "dumbness," "silence," as in the title to lvi., the only other place where it occurs, אָלִי, "the dumb, or silent dove." If we adhere to this reading, the construction will be that of the accusative used adverbially; "in silence," "silently," i.e. if ye keep silence (as the Chald. takes it), etc. Gesen. and others, would render, "Do ye indeed decree dumb justice?" i.e. do ye really at length decree justice, which has so long seemed dumb? But אָלִים, "dumbness of righteousness," cannot mean "dumb righteousness." This would be expressed by אָלִים צַדִּיקִים, "righteousness of dumbness." Rashi takes אָלִים as the predicate, "Is the righteousness which ye should speak really dumb (in your month)?" Others, very harshly, would make two clauses: "Are ye really dumb? Do ye speak," etc. Kimchi would give to אָלִים the meaning of "band" (from אָלַם, *to bind*), and has been followed by Calvin and others, and the E. V. "O congregation." Mendels., J. D. Michaelis, Ewald, and others, would change the punctuation and read אָלִים, defective for אֱלִים (as in Ex. xv. 11), "O ye gods," a term applied to the judges who are here addressed, a meaning which is defended by Ex. xxi. 6; xxii. 7, 8; Ps. lxxxii. (See note on ver. 1 of that Psalm). Neither the LXX nor the Syr. expresses the word at all, and it may possibly have arisen from the preceding אֱמִנִים. The question with אֱמִנִים expects a negative answer, *num vere?* as in Num. xxii. 37; 1 Kings viii. 27. Hence the answer with אָלִים = *imo vero*, or as Calvin, *quin potius*.

<sup>c</sup> זָרִי instead of זָרִי, as באֵי, Jer. xxvii. 18 (Gesen. § 72, Rem. 1).

<sup>d</sup> רָמַאסוּ, as from a form מאַס, instead of מַסַּס, as also in Job vii. 5, instead of רָמַסוּ. The following לָמִי is used with a reflexive shade of meaning (as in the Latin, *suo sibi gladio*), which cannot be conveyed in English.

<sup>e</sup> יִרְדֶּה הַצֵּי. The verb, which is properly used of the *bending of the bow*, is here applied to the *shooting of the arrow*. For the K'thibh, יִרְצֵי, the K'ri has יִרְצֵי, on which Hupfeld strangely observes, that if God be the subject of the preceding verb, it must be read יִרְצֵי. But why may it not be said that God shoots his arrows as well as his arrow?

<sup>f</sup> כְּמוֹ . The particle has been strangely misinterpreted. The LXX, *ἕως οὗ ἀσθενήσουσιν*; Jerome, “donec conterantur”; Syr., “until they be consumed.” Delitzsch would here take כְּמוֹ (which in Gen. xix. 15 means “so soon as”) as meaning “immediately,” and refers to Isa. xxvi. 18, where, however, it may be rendered “as though,” which is its signification here. רְחִמְלֵנִי, either Hithpal. from מוֹל (so Gesen.), or Hithpo. from מלל.

<sup>g</sup> שְׂבָבִילִי (with *Dag. dirimens* for שְׂבָבִילִי) is properly “the slug.” So Kimchi and Rashi, following the Chald. Aq. has *ὁμοίως γῆς ἐντέρω*, “a worm,” and so Jerome, *quasi vermis*. LXX and Theod. render it by *κηρός*, “wax” (and so the Syr.), and they are followed by Ewald. The Talmud has the word in the sense of “slug,” as Delitzsch has remarked.

<sup>h</sup> הָהֵם, here a noun, and not (as in xxxix. 10 [11]) fut. apoc. Hiph. of מָסָה (as Delitzsch, “as a slug which thou squashest.”) On the constr. see Gesen. § 138, Rem. 1.

<sup>i</sup> הָיוּ, the plur. verb, while the preceding נָפַל is singular. Possibly the noun may here be used as a collective or noun of multitude = “those untimely born.” Otherwise this clause must be elliptical, and the particle of comparison be repeated here as well as before אֵל. The latter is, I think, preferable, and so Delitzsch and Bunsen. אֲנִי, which is properly stat. constr., stands here as in Deut. xxi. 11; 1 Sam. xxviii. 7, as absol.

<sup>k</sup> This verse has been very differently rendered. A careful criticism of the words may help us to decide as to its meaning.

(1) סִיר־הַיָּבֶשׁ . The word סִיר may mean either *a thorn*, or *a pot*, or *vessel for cooking*. A distinction, however, is observed in the plur. of this word, the masc. being always used of *thorns*, and the fem. of *pots* (except in Amos iv. 2, where it is used of *fish-hooks*, perhaps as resembling thorns).

(2) רְבִינוּ, “perceive, are sensible of, i.e. feel the effect of,” is used here like other verbs, which properly imply a *living* agent, of things without life. Comp. Judges xvi. 9; Jér. xvii. 8; Job vi. 30; xiv. 9; xxx. 1.

(3) אֶצְרִי, the *ramnus* or *blackthorn*, here apparently put for a fire composed of such thorns,

(4) חַי, “living.” In 1 Sam. ii. 15, the adj. is used of *raw, uncooked* meat, and some would so understand it here of the meat in the cooking vessel; but as this has not been mentioned, it seems better to refer it to אֶצְרִי, in the sense of *fresh, green*, the thorn which has not yet been parched by the fire, the opposite to which is

(5) תָּרוֹן (prop. *a burning*, or *brand*), here used of the *burning* thorn; that which has already caught the fire, or, as others, *dry*. Symm. ὀλόξηρον. Those who interpret תָּרִי of the *raw* flesh, explain this of the *cooked* meat. תָּרוֹן, however, is not here used as an adj., but like other words in תָּרִי, as an accus. expressing state, condition, etc. “*in burning*.” Others, again, render it *wrath*.

(6) כָּמוֹ...כָּמוֹ, the two particles evidently answer to one another, = *sive ... sive*, or *as well...as*. Elsewhere it is only repeated with suffixes, and, in formulae like the present, the double כָּ is used instead. Hence some have taken the first כָּמוֹ as a particle of time, and תָּרִי as a verb: “whilst it (the thorn) is still living, before it has been cut down, that is, and used for the fire, (it shall be) as if wrath (תָּרוֹן) swept it away like a whirlwind.”

On the impers. יִשְׁעֶרְנָה, “one shall whirl it (i.e. the thorns, אֶתְנָה) away,” for the passive, “they shall be whirled away,” comp. note on ver. 7. The older versions for the most part take כִּירֹת in the sense of *thorns*, and do not take the כָּמוֹ...כָּמוֹ as correlative (except the Vulg.) The LXX, πρὸ τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς ἀκάνθας ὑμῶν τὴν ῥάμνον ὥσεί ζῶντας ὥσεί ἐν ὀργῇ καταπίεται ὑμᾶς; Symm., πρὶν ἢ αὐξηθῶσιν αἱ ἀκανθαὶ ὑμῶν ὥστε γενέσθαι ῥάμνος, ἔτι ζῶντα ὡς ὀλόξηρον λαῖλαψ ἀρεῖ; Jerome, “Antequam crescant spinæ vestrae in rhamnum, quasi viventes, quasi in ira tempestas rapiet eos.”

## PSALM LIX.

THIS Psalm, which in tone, coloring, and expression, has much in common with the four preceding Psalms, is said in the title to have been composed by David when Saul's emissaries watched him in his own house. The history is given in 1 Sam. xix. 11-18. Saul commanded the men whom he sent to surround the house, and to kill David if he attempted to leave it. They were baffled by Michal's artifice, but from that hour Saul's hatred of him never slumbered, and he never ceased to persecute him and to hunt him down like a wild beast. It is quite consistent with David's character that he should commemorate in his songs such a crisis in his life. But the internal evidence lends little confirmation to the accuracy of the title. The allusions in verses 6 and 14 are obviously not peculiarly applicable to Saul's emissaries, as Hengstenberg admits; and all that seems certain is, that the Psalm was called forth by some attack upon the life of its author.

De Wette thinks it is a lamentation of the people in the time of the Exile; Hitzig, that it was written by Hezekiah when shut up in Jerusalem by the Assyrians; Ewald, that it is the work of one of the last kings of Judah when besieged by a multitude of heathen enemies in league with the Chaldeans. But the mention of "the nations" (ver. 5, 8) does not prove that the enemies of the Psalmist are foreign nations (see notes); the enemies described are *personal* enemies, they go *about through the city* (ver. 6, 14; comp. lv. 10 [11]); they persecute with their lips, not with swords; their curse is to wander about for bread.

The structure of the Psalm is highly artificial. It has a double refrain. Verse 6 [7] answers to verse 14 [15], each opening a strophe or stanza; verse 9 [10] to ver. 17 [18], each concluding a strophe in like manner. Besides this, separate words and phrases correspond; the "And *thou*" (emphatic), verses 5 [6], 8 [9], with "and *I*," verse 16 [17]; "all nations," 5 [6], 8 [9], with "the ends of the earth," verse 13 [14], "they wander about," verse 11 [12] and 15 [16].

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions, verses 1-9, and verses 10-17. Each of these again falls into two lesser strophes; the first, in each case, closing with *Selah*, and the last, in each case, opening with a similar verse, and closing with the refrain.

I. (1) A cry to God for help against enemies; a description of their perserving malice; an assertion of the Psalmist's own innocence, and the confiding of his cause to God as the Judge (ver. 1-5).

(2) A further account of the machinations of the wicked; the confident assurance of their discomfiture, and an expression of trust in God (ver. 6-9).

II. (1) This part opens with a renewed expression of trust in God, especially with reference to the issue of the struggle with his enemies; repeats the story of their malice, and also the prayer for their punishment, in such wise that God may be acknowledged as the Judge of the earth (ver. 10-13).

(2) It closes with the curse upon the wicked, and with joyful acknowledgment of God's goodness to the Psalmist (ver. 14-17).

[For the Precentor. "Destroy not." A Michtam<sup>a</sup> of David, when Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death.]

I. (1) 1 Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God!

Set me on high from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,

And save me from the bloodthirsty men.



3 For lo, they have woven plots for my soul ;

They gather themselves together against me in  
their strength,

Not for<sup>b</sup> my transgression, and not for any sin of  
mine, O Jehovah !

4 Without guilt (of mine) do they run and set them-  
selves ;

Awake, then, to meet me, and see !

5 Yea, do THOU, O Jehovah God (of) hosts,<sup>c</sup> God of Israel,  
Rouse thyself to visit all the nations !

Spare not all them that are faithless in (their) iniquity.  
[Selah.]

3. THEY HAVE WOVEN. The *perfect* as describing the past plotting and deliberation, whilst the present result is expressed by the verb in the *present* tense, "They gather," etc.

IN THEIR STRENGTH; lit. "strong," but the adjective is here not, I think, a fresh subject, "strong (or violent) ones gather," etc., as it is usually rendered, but rather a predicate, the subject having been already expressed in verse 2.

NOT FOR MY TRANSGRESSION, etc.; lit. "Without my transgression, and without my sin."

4. RUN AND SET THEMSELVES. The words are military terms; for the first, see xviii. 29 [30] (according to one interpretation), Job xv. 26; xvi. 14; the other denotes the marshalling in order, the array of troops, with a view to the execution of a determined plan. Or, as Hengstenberg explains, a metaphor borrowed from an attacking host, which, getting a firm footing on the walls of a beleaguered city, is ready to rush in over them, or through them as already broken, into the city.

TO MEET ME, i.e. to help me; comp. verse 10 [11], and see vii. 6 [7]. The phrase is elsewhere used in the opposite sense, xxxv. 2 [3].

5. THOU. The pronoun is emphatic, the heart turning to God as the sure defence against its fierce and cruel enemies.

JEHOVAH GOD, or "Jehovah Elohim"

(cf. lxxii. 18), the name of God, which is characteristic of the section, Gen. ii. 4-iii. 23. Joined, as here, with Sabaoth (hosts), it occurs besides lxxx. 4 [5], 19 [20]; lxxxiv. 8 [9]. In calling Jehovah *the God of hosts*, the Psalmist sets forth, as Calvin observes, his boundless power; in adding *the God of Israel*, the peculiar regard which he has for his own children and the church. (See more in Critical Note.)

ALL THE NATIONS, i.e. heathen nations, but it is difficult to determine why they are particularly mentioned here. Some suppose that the Psalmist was living among heathens (see introduction to the Psalm); others, that the term "nations" is here improperly applied to those Israelites who, in their godlessness, were no better than heathen. But the expression "*all nations*" is against the first view, and the second is wholly unsupported by usage. It is more probable that the language is intended to denote that God is the *universal* Judge. "The nations," to an Israelite, would be the embodiment of all that opposed itself to God; and in appealing to God to punish them he would, in fact, be appealing to him to punish all evil, wherever manifested. The special judgment would follow from the universal, and be an instance of it. Even for the vindication of his personal innocence, we find one Psalmist (vii. 6-8 [7-9]) calling upon

(2) 6 They return at evening, they howl like a dog,  
And make their round about (the) city.

7 Lo, they belch out with their mouth;  
Swords are in their lips;  
For who (they think) doth hear?

8 But THOU, O Jehovah, dost laugh at them,  
Thou mockest at all (the) nations.

9 O my strength,<sup>d</sup> on thee will I wait,  
For God is my high tower.

II. (1) 10 My God with his loving-kindness<sup>e</sup> shall come to  
meet me,

God to assemble all nations to his judgment-seat. Such expressions seem to us exaggerated, partly because of the comparative coldness of the Western mind, and partly because it is very difficult for us to conceive of the feelings of a true Israelite, to whom the whole outer heathen world was a world lying under the heavy wrath of God, and to whom the greater part even of Israel itself seemed corrupt and apostate. An intensity both of privilege and also of suffering thus attached to the "small remnant," which it is necessary to remember, if we would understand the strong language of psalmists and prophets.

FAITHLESS IN (THEIR) INIQUITY, or, iniquitous traitors. Ewald renders: *alle sündliche Räuber*, "all sinful robbers," taking the other meaning of the participle. See xxv. note <sup>b</sup>.

6. He compares his enemies to the gaunt, hungry, half-starved, half-wild dogs which, to this day, in the East, prowl in troops about the cities and villages, without a master, looking for the offal and carrion which are their food, wherever they can find it. Comp. xxii. 16 [17]; 1 Kings xiv. 11; 2 Kings ix. 36.

AT EVENING, i.e. every evening, the evening being the time when these animals usually assemble (Rosenm.); or denoting, as Calvin thinks, their insatiable cruelty, "for he says that they

return at evening, not because they rest at other times, but because they are never tired in their wickedness. If all day long they get nothing, the evening will find them still running about the city." Comp. lv. 10 [11], Cant. iii. 2.

7. THEY BELCH OUT. Such seems here to be the force of the word as given by the E.V. Properly it means "to gush out," as water; see the same word in xix. 2 [3], "Day unto day *poureth forth* speech." Comp. xciv. 4; Prov. xv. 2, 28. Symm., ἀποβλύουσιν.

BUT THOU. These men with their murderous thoughts, whose very words are swords (comp. lii. 2 [4]; lv. 21 [22]; lvii. 4 [5], and who feel so secure in their bloodthirsty designs that they think God hearkens not, and will not punish, shall learn their mistake. *Thou*, O God, *thou* whom they forget, wilt laugh them to scorn, as thou dost all throughout the world who oppose thee. Hence he says:

ALL NATIONS, taking the widest view, and therefore including those who are here the prominent enemies. See above on verse 5; or, as Calvin explains, though they should in numbers equal the whole world, yet they and their power would all be mocked. Comp. ii. 4; xxxvii. 13.

9. O MY STRENGTH. The Masoretic reading, "*his* strength," gives no satisfactory sense, though various attempts have been made to defend it (see Critical Note). "David here ascends the watch-tower of faith, whence he can look down

He shall make me see (my desire) upon them  
that lie in wait for me.

- 11 Slay them not, lest my people forget (it),  
Make them reel by thy power, and cast them down,  
O Lord, our shield !
- 12 Their mouth sinneth through every word of their lips,  
And so<sup>f</sup> let them be taken in their pride ;  
And because of (their) cursing and of lying  
(which) they speak.
- 13 Consume (them) in wrath, consume (them), that  
they be no more,  
That (men) may know that God ruleth in Jacob  
Unto the ends of the earth. [Selah.]

calmly on the violent assaults of his foes, fully assured that they can do nothing but by the permission of God."—*Calvin*.

10. MY GOD, etc. According to the Masoretic correction the reading would be, "The God of my loving-kindness, i.e. my gracious, merciful God, shall come to meet me." This is a favorite passage with Augustine in his arguments against the Pelagians. He often alleges it in proof of the doctrine that the grace of God precedes all merit of man. And here he observes: "Quid in me invenisti nisi sola peccata? . . . Antequam aliquid boni ego faciam, *misericordia ejus praeveniet me*. Quid hic respondebit infelix Pelagius"? But, as Calvin very justly remarks, this may be a pious, but it is not a fair, use of the passage (*pie quidem, sed nimis argue*).

SHALL COME TO MEET ME, as in xxi. 3 [4].

The prayer that follows is a very fearful one. The Psalmist would not have his enemies crushed in a moment by the heavy hand of God, but he would see them come to a lingering end; he would have God take them, as it were, in their own infatuation; he would see them reel and stagger in the intoxication of their own pride, and under the strong buffeting of God's hand, a spectacle and a warning to all, before they are finally

cast down; he would watch their course as they are carried, blind with passion, to the summit, thence to be hurled headlong over the precipice. Comp. with this curse, 2 Sam. iii. 29 and 1 Sam. ii. 36.

11. MAKE THEM REEL; lit. "make them wander," which many take literally and not metaphorically. So Hengstenberg who compares the curse on Cain, Gen. iv. 12, and Num. xxxii. 13; Ps. cix. 10.

OUR SHIELD, as in iii. 3 [4]; xviii. 2 [3]; xxviii. 7.

12. THEIR MOUTH SINNETH, etc.; lit. "The word of their lips (is) the sin of their mouth," i.e. every word of their mouth is sin. But the addition, "of their lips," seems weak and unnecessary, so that perhaps Ewald's rendering is better:

"The sin of their mouth, the word of their lips —

Oh let them be taken in their pride," etc. (See Critical Note.)

13. CONSUME THEM. This does not contradict the previous imprecation. He would have his enemies destroyed at last, but only *after* they had been, by a protracted miserable existence, a warning to men of God's righteous severity.

GOD, and not Saul (if the allusion be to him), or any other whatsoever.

UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

- (2) 14 And they shall return at evening, they shall howl  
like a dog,  
And make their round about (the) city ;  
15 As for them, they shall wander about for food,  
Without being satisfied must they pass the night.<sup>s</sup>  
16 But as for me, I will sing (of) thy strength,  
Yea I will shout aloud, in the morning, of thy loving-  
kindness.  
17 For thou hast been a high tower for me,  
And a refuge in the day when I was in distress.  
18 O my strength, unto thee let me sing,  
For God is my high tower, the God of my loving-  
kindness.

This may mean that God, sitting in Jacob, having there his throne, exercises thence a universal dominion. But, according to the accent, these words should rather be connected with the words "that men may know." So Calvin: "David indicates a singular kind of punishment, one the fame of which would reach even the most distant nations." And so Hengstenberg, who refers to David's words to Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 46), "And all the earth shall know that there is a God in Israel."

14. This verse repeats what was said in verse 6, but the language of verse 15 shows plainly that a different turn is given here to the expression. There, the conduct of his enemies is described ; here, their punishment. They came about him like dogs ; like dogs shall they be treated. Their sin becomes its own curse. They come with their mouth wide open, ready to devour, but they shall find nothing to satisfy their hunger ; they shall remain lean, hungry, savage, as they came. So Calvin : "There is an allusion to what he had before said concerning their ravenous hunger. For he does not now repeat the words in the same sense in which he had employed them before, but ironically says that they shall be hungry in another way. Before, he complained that they barked

like dogs, because they were urged by an insatiable desire to do mischief ; but now he mocks at their wicked attempts, and says that, after they have wearied themselves all day long, they shall fail of their object." This seems to be the meaning here, though some interpreters think there is no variation in the sense of the two verses 6 and 14, and either understand both as describing the present conduct of David's enemies (as Delitzsch), "they return," etc., or both as optative, said with a kind of defiance, "let them return," etc.

15. THEY SHALL WANDER ABOUT : the same verb as in verse 11, so that perhaps the same rendering should be preserved in both places : either there, "make them wander," or here, "they shall reel." The Masoretic change of punctuation here is made for the sake of uniformity, to have the Hiph. in both verses, but obviously a neuter, not an active, meaning is required here. The Kal should therefore be retained.

16. IN THE MORNING, here apparently = "every fresh morning," parallel to "in the evening" (ver. 6, 14).

17. The refrain occurs as at the end of the second strophe, verse 9, but with slight variations, which have already been noticed there.



<sup>a</sup> See above on lvii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> בָּלֵא stands here for בָּלֵא, Ewald, § 286 *g*. in the same sense as בָּלֵי ע', which follows. In the next verse יִרְצֶנּוּ is the energetic future, as expressing the readiness and willingness of the action, and רִכְנֵנוּ the Hithp. with Dagesh supplying the place of the characteristic ה. For similar forms see Prov. xxvi. 26; Lev. xiii. 55, and Deut. xxi. 8 (Nithp.)

<sup>c</sup> ר' א' אֶלְהִי צִדְקָתוֹ. The juxtaposition is peculiar; it occurs again lxxx. 5, 20; lxxxiv. 9. We should expect the constr. אֶלְהִי instead of the absol., but it seems to be formed upon the analogy of יְהוֹה צ', the name יהוה אלהים being considered as one word. There is, however, still no doubt an ellipse as in ר' צ', and the full expression would be, as Aben-Ezra remarks, ר' א' אֶלְהִי צ'.

<sup>d</sup> עָנִי. By the suff. of the 3d pers. some suppose Saul to be meant. Hengst. "the ideal person of the wicked,"—either a nom. abs. "as to his strength," or "because of his strength, let me," etc., or as an accus., "his strength will I keep for thee," i.e. however he may boast of his strength, I will remain quiet, and leave it to thee; or as Hengst., "Conscious of my own weakness, I will put his strength into thy hands, that thou mayest deal with it." But these and other renderings only show how hopeless the reading is. We must therefore read עָנִי here as in ver. 17 [18], a reading which is supported by some mss. of Kenn. and De R., and the Chald., LXX, and Jerome; but there is no need to change the verb אֶשְׁמְרָה, as variations in the refrain are common enough. שָׁמַר here with אֵל seems to be used in nearly the same sense as in xxxi. 6 [7] (where see note <sup>a</sup>), "regard, honor, wait upon," etc. with the accus. Hupfeld defends its use by 1 Sam. xxvi. 15, 16, where it is true the prep. follows, but the verb has a different meaning, "to keep watch over."

<sup>e</sup> The K'thîbh חסדִי seems to require the reading אֶלְהִי חֶסְדִּי, which yields a very satisfactory sense (as in text); and there is no reason, consequently, for the K'ri א' חֶסְדִּי, "God of *my* loving-kindness," i.e. my gracious God, which was probably adopted here from ver. 18, and has the oldest versions against it. The LXX, ὁ Θεός μου τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ προφθάσει με; and the Syr. "O God, thy goodness shall prevent me."

<sup>f</sup> וְיִלְכְּדוּ. This may either be an opt. "and so let them," etc., or may carry on the description "and they are taken." According to Ewald's rendering (see note on the verse) the ו stands emphatically before the verb, as in xxv. 11. In the next clause, בֵּן cannot mean *of, concerning*, but *because of, on account of*. Why Hupfeld should object to this, as

making מן equivalent in meaning to ב, I cannot understand. Surely to say "let them be taken *in* their pride and *because of* their lies" is not to reduce the two prepositions to the same meaning. His own rendering, "out of cursing and out of lies do they speak" (as the source or motive of their discourse), has nothing to recommend it. The relat. is understood before יִסְפְּרוּ, which has here the general sense of *speaking*, as in lxiv. 6; lxix. 27, etc.

אִם לֹא יִ' י' <sup>g</sup>. "If they are not satisfied, so must they pass the night," the opposite to the promise given to the righteous, Prov. xix. 23. Instead of the imperf. (fut.) we should expect here, as Hupfeld remarks, either the perf. or the participle, "not satisfied," as in Prov. xix. 23; but this last seems here to be resolved by אִם with the imperf. (fut.) in the sense of *though* — "though they are not, or, without being satisfied"; or the fut. may be the fut. perf., as Calvin: "quamvis non fuerint saturati, cogentur tamen ire cubitum." The ו in יִלְיִינוּ introduces the apodosis. Ewald takes אִם לֹא in the sense of *assuredly, verily*, and renders:

They will reel to their food,

Verily they shall satisfy themselves — and remain,

i.e. lie dead, after having drunk of the cup of wrath which God puts into their hands. This he thinks is said sarcastically.

## PSALM LX.

ACCORDING to the title, this Psalm was composed in memory of Joab's victory over the Edomites in the Valley of Salt. Nothing is said in the scanty record in 2 Sam. viii. of the circumstances which led to this war; but it is probable that whilst David was engaged in his first Syrian campaign, the Edomites turned the opportunity to good account, and threatened, if they did not actually invade, Palestine. The king, therefore, was compelled hastily to detach Joab and some part of his forces to meet these new enemies. Whether they had not yet crossed the frontier, or whether they were on their way back from a successful raid into Hebrew territory, as has been conjectured, we do not know; but a severe battle was fought in the Valley of Salt, near the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, in which the Edomites were defeated with great slaughter. This battle decided the fate of the Edomites; they never rallied after it, and Joab overran the whole

country. After the fashion of Eastern conquerors, he almost exterminated the male population, garrisoned the principal cities with Hebrew troops, and reduced the people to a state of vassalage. It was in the interval between the first great battle and the final subjugation of the country that this Psalm, as Hengstenberg and others suppose, was written. It seems to acknowledge a partial success, and to anticipate a greater: "Who *will* conduct me into the fortified city (or cities)? Who *hath* led me unto Edom?" Further, the Psalm speaks of the Moabites and Philistines as recently vanquished enemies, and from 2 Sam. viii. we know that they had been completely subdued by David shortly before his Syrian campaign. Lastly, it supposes the unity of the kingdom; Judah being the ruling tribe, and Ephraim at the same time maintaining a high and honorable position, without dissension and without rivalry; and this was the case only during the reigns of David and Solomon.

So far, no doubt, the contents of the Psalm agree very well with the statement made in the title as to the date of its composition. On the other hand, it opens with a wail of lamentation, which implies that the arms of Israel had met with some terrible reverses, or that the state had been shaken by intestine disorders. But we have no record in the history of any such catastrophe at the time. On the contrary, David seems to have been at the very height of his glory and to have been everywhere victorious. Bishop Colenso indeed argues that David's forces may on some occasions have been defeated, and yet that such defeats would not be mentioned in the rapid summary of his exploits in 2 Sam. viii.; and Hengstenberg thinks that the lamentation of the Psalmist has reference to an invasion of the Edomites into Judaea during David's absence in Syria, and that the terrible vengeance upon Edom was in consequence of the excesses which they had then committed. But the language of verses 1-3 points to some loss more serious and more permanent than a hasty invasion or an occasional defeat; and if so, it is surprising that the history should pass it over in silence. Again, the union between Judah and Ephraim (ver. 7) is represented rather as a matter of hope and promise than as already accomplished. And, in like manner, all that is said of Moab, Edom, and Philistia, may refer to the future, not to the past. (See notes on verses 7, 8).

To say the least, therefore, it is not certain that the Psalm belongs to the age of David. In its lamentations over past disasters it bears considerable resemblance to Psalm xlv., but is so different from it in style that it cannot have been written by the same author, nor does it

seem to belong to the same period. Psalm xliv. is clearly the later Psalm, and may have been partly based upon this.

Ewald thinks that the Psalm in its present form is to be referred to a time after the captivity, but that "the words from verse 6 [8] as far as the first words of verse 10 [12], 'Hast not thou, O God?' are borrowed from an older, and no doubt Davidic, song. . . . The dissimilarity strikes the eye at the first glance." The *old* passage, according to him, was composed by David in the latter part of his life, when he was threatened by the Philistines (comp. 2 Sam. v. 17, etc., xxiii. 9, etc.); he had besought counsel and strength from Jehovah in the sanctuary, and he here records the cheering answer which he received. The later poet, Ewald says, feeling how suitable such an oracle was to his own times, though the enemies which he had to fear were not Philistines, but other heathen nations, adopted it without alteration, merely adding a new introduction and a new conclusion in his own words, to make the whole more suitable to the times in which he lived.

The Psalm consists of three strophes :

- I. A lamentation over past disasters, with a cry for help (ver. 1-5).
- II. The appeal to God's word and promise as the sufficient pledge that the prayer which precedes will be answered (ver. 6-8).
- III. The triumphant hope and anticipation of victory as springing out of and resting upon the Divine oracles (ver. 9-12).

[For the Precentor. Upon "the Lily of the Testimony." <sup>a</sup> A Michtam of David. For Teaching. When he fought with Aram of the two Rivers (Mesopotamia) and Aram of Zobah; and Joab returned and smote Edom in the Valley of Salt (to the number of) twelve thousand men.]

- I. 1 O God, Thou hast cast us off, thou hast broken us ;  
Thou hast been angry ; restore us again.<sup>b</sup>

1. THOU HAST CAST US OFF. The same word as in xliv. 9 [10]. It is also used of an individual in xliii. 2.

THOU HAST BROKEN US. The word is employed of the defeat of an army whose ranks have been broken (2 Sam. v. 20), where the comparison is made of water breaking through a dam. In Judges xxi. 15 it is said of the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin, that "Jehovah had made a *breach* (*Perez*) in the

tribes of Israel," a great gap being left as it were in the goodly phalanx which the twelve tribes presented. Primarily, no doubt, the root is used of the breaking down of a wall, as lxxx. 12 [13]; lxxxix. 40 [41]. And hence it is applied to the breaking down and overthrowing of armies and nations, as here and in the passages cited above, and also of individuals, as in the judgment upon Uzzah (2 Sam. vi. 8).



- 2 Thou hast made (the) land to tremble, thou hast cleaved it;  
Heal the breaches thereof, for it hath tottered.
- 3 Thou hast showed thy people a hard thing,  
Thou hast made us drink infatuation<sup>c</sup> (as) wine.
- 4 Thou hast given to them that fear thee a banner,  
That they my muster<sup>d</sup> (around it) from before the  
bow,<sup>e</sup> [Selah.]
- 5 That thy beloved may be delivered;  
Save (with) thy right hand, and answer us.

2. The metaphor is borrowed apparently from the action of an earthquake, which has split asunder the ground and torn it into rifts and chasms. In like manner there has been a violent disorganization of the body politic. Hupfeld infers from the words "Heal the *breaches* thereof" that the image (as in the previous verse) is that of a building or wall broken down, an image frequently employed in the Old Testament, and one which in Isa. xxx. 13 is applied to the overthrow of the nation. But both figures may have been in the Psalmist's mind; the "trembling" of the land denoting the earthquake, and the second member of the verse referring to its effects in broken buildings and tottering walls. Whether the "cleaving" here spoken of is to be understood of the actual disruption of the kingdom and the separation of the tribes is not certain. In any case, however, verses 2 and 3 are more readily understood of internal political disorganization than of the terror produced by hostile invasion.

3. THOU HAST SHOWED; lit. "made to see," i.e. made to *feel* or experience; the verb of *sight* being used, as in Greek, of the senses generally. A HARD THING, a heavy fate; the same word as in 1 Sam. xx. 10; 1 Kings xii. 13.

INFATUATION, or "bewilderment"; lit. "reeling, staggering," as the effects of intoxication. This infatuation is the wine which God has made them drink, the two words being in apposition with one another; the rendering of the E.V., "the wine of astonishment," is grammatically impossible (see Critical Note).

The same figure occurs lxxv. 8 [9]; Isa. li. 17, 22; Jer. xiii. 13; xxv. 15; xlix. 12, and in many other passages. It denotes not merely a divine punishment, but that kind of punishment which comes of men's own desperate indulgence of their pride, folly, passion. When men *will* drink presumptuously of the cup of their own wickedness, God forces it as it were into their hands, till they have drained the very dregs as the cup of his wrath. Thus God punishes evil with greater evil, pride with presumptuous pride, folly with more desperate folly. As is usual in the Old Testament, this, though sin as well as curse, is ascribed directly to God, as is the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, the sending of the evil spirit into Saul, and of a lying spirit into the false prophets. See note on li. 4.

4. A BANNER. The standard was raised as a signal for war, round which they were to rally. (Comp. Isa. v. 26; xiii. 2.) The fact that God had given them such a banner, that he had himself reared it in the midst of them, was a ground of hope, and also of prayer, "Save with thy right hand," etc. Notwithstanding the *Selah*, the construction might be carried on into the next verse; the words "That thy beloved," etc. depending not upon the prayer which follows, but upon the words "Thou hast given a banner," or perhaps on the whole sentence in verse 4. But see more in Critical Note.

5. THY BELOVED, the same word as

## II. 6 God hath spoken in his holiness :

Let me exult, let me portion out Shechem,  
And the valley of Succoth let me measure.

in Deut. xxxiii. 12, and in the name Jedidiah given to Solomon.

ANSWER US. According to the Masoretic correction, "Answer me," which however seems to be unnecessary.

6. Having thus encouraged himself and his people with the assurance of God's favor and the hope of deliverance, he now turns to the promises on which those hopes rested. "Nam utcumque Deus innumeris gratiae suae exemplis nos obruat, nulla tamen vigeat eorum notitia, nisi praefulgente verbo."—*Calvin*.

GOD HATH SPOKEN IN HIS HOLINESS, almost equivalent to "hath promised by his holiness." Comp. lxxxix. 35 [36], "One thing have I sworn by my holiness" (Amos iv. 2). The LXX have ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ; Jerome, *In sanctuario suo*, and so Luther, "In his sanctuary," as if the allusion were to an oracle shortly before received; and Delitzsch suggests that in the war with Edom, David may have received an oracle from the high-priest by means of the Urim and Thummim, which assured him of the safety of the Holy Land, and of his victory over the bordering tribes. But, as he admits, the promise in 2 Sam. vii. 9 is quite sufficient to meet the occasion. Hengstenberg thinks that Gen. xlix., Numb. xxiv., Deut. xxxiii. may also have been in the Psalmist's mind. In the words that follow, "Let me exult," etc., to the end of verse 8 [10], there is some doubt who is the speaker. According to Hupfeld, Bunsen, and Olsh. it is God. Ewald is of the same opinion, except that he takes the first words, "Let me exult," as the words of the Psalmist himself, parenthetically—which is favored by the accent,—and the rest as the utterance of the divine oracle. Hengstenberg thinks that the people, and Delitzsch, following the older interpreters, that the king, is the speaker. This last seems to me the most probable view; though, it is possible, that by a

bold figure God, himself, may be supposed to speak as an earthly warrior, and as the leader of the hosts of his people, through whom they achieve the victory. He, as their true King and Captain, identifies himself with them, and hence speaks not only of their success, but of their joy as his own.

PORTION OUT . . . MEASURE, in allusion to the assigning the different portions (κληροί) of the conquered territory, as by Joshua, on the conquest of Canaan. Here, however, the figure is borrowed from the original conquest of the country, and applied to its reconstitution, not by means of a redistribution of territory, but by a fresh political organization, which should give new life to the whole country, and be, as it were, the beginning of a new state.

SHECHEM and SUCCOTH are probably selected as famous names in ancient times; Rosenmüller thinks they are intended to mark, the one the cis-Jordanic, and the other the trans-Jordanic region, and so to embrace the whole land which Israel claimed on both sides the river as his inheritance. Succoth was the first place at which Jacob halted when, on his return from Mesopotamia, he descended from the mountains of Gilead, and it received its name from the "booths," or "huts" which he then built there. (Comp. Gen. xxxiii. 16, 18, with Judges viii. 5–17, whence it appears that Succoth lay between Peniel, near the ford of the Jabbok, and Shechem.) Shechem in the heart of Palestine was his next station, and there he found a permanent home: it became afterwards the chief city of the tribe of Ephraim, and for a time the capital of the northern kingdom. But it seems doubtful whether Succoth was on the east of the Jordan. Jerome, indeed (*Quaest. in Gen.* xxxiii. 16), places it there, and the fact that it was allotted to the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii. 27) renders this probable. On the

7 Mine is Gilead, and mine Manasseh,

Ephraim also is the defence of my head ;

Judah is my sceptre.

8 Moab is my wash-pot ;

Upon Edom will I cast my shoe.

Because of me, O Philistia, cry aloud.

other hand, Robinson (*Bib. Res.* iii. 309, etc.) and Van de Velde (*Syr. and Pal.* ii. 343) identify it with a place called *Sôlcût*, on the western bank of the river. "Until the position of Succoth is more exactly ascertained, it is impossible to say what was the valley of Succoth." (See Mr. Grove's article, *Succoth*, in the *Dict. of the Bible*.) Why this valley should be mentioned at all, it is hard to say, except it be from its old association with Shechem in the history of Jacob (*Gen.* xxxiii.). Instead of Succoth, Aq. has *κοιλάδα συσκιασμών*, and the LXX, *τὴν κοιλάδα τῶν σκηρῶν*.

7. This verse has reference both to the geographical and to the political division of the Holy Land. Geographically, Gilead and Manasseh denote the Israelitish territory east of the Jordan, as Ephraim and Judah represent Western Palestine. Politically, the two last-mentioned tribes were the most important, the one in the north, and the other in the south ; and thus the whole land and nation are in fact summed up.

THE DEFENCE OF MY HEAD, the strong and warlike tribe of Ephraim being to the state what the helmet is to the warriors in battle ; or, perhaps, "the strength of my head," the allusion being to *Deut.* xxxiii. 17, "His horns are as the horns of a buffalo ; with them he shall push the nations."

MY SCEPTRE, or "baton of command." The reference is to *Gen.* xlix. 10, where, as well as in *Numb.* xxi. 18, the parallelism seems to require this meaning. But the other rendering, "My Lawgiver," may be defended by *Deut.* xxxiii. 21 ; *Isa.* xxxiii. 22, and has the support of the ancient versions. Symm., *πρωτόδωσον ὁ ἐμός* ; LXX, *βασιλεὺς μου* ; Jerome, *legifer meus*.

8. But the Psalmist anticipates not the constitution only of the kingdom in its integrity and its firm consolidation by the union of the various tribes, but the extension of the kingdom also by the subjugation of neighboring nations. Those nations are chiefly mentioned which had been from the earliest times the enemies, and the bitterest enemies, of Israel. The order in which they are mentioned is from the east, and thence along the south to the west. None of them was ever completely subjugated, though David greatly reduced them and humbled their power (*2 Sam.* viii.), but triumph over them forms part of the promise of later prophets. See especially *Isa.* xi. 14, where it is promised in connection with the union of Ephraim and Judah.

The expressions which follow, indicating the subjugation of Moab and Edom, are decidedly contemptuous.

MY WASH-POT, expressive of the state of ignominious bondage to which the Moabites would be reduced. The vessel used for washing the feet is meant, as a dishonorable vessel. (*Comp. Herod.* ii. 172.) This meaning is perhaps intended to be conveyed by the rendering of one of the Greek translators, *λεκάνη τῆς καταπατήσεώς μου*.

WILL I CAST MY SHOE. Edom is regarded as the slave to whom the master throws his shoes to be taken away or to be cleaned. *Comp. Matt.* iii. 11, and for the construction, *1 Kings* xix. 19. The expression is not used of taking possession of property, for in *Ruth* iv. 7 the kinsman does not throw his shoe, but takes it off and gives it ; and so far from the action being symbolical of taking possession, it is symbolical of giving up one's right. There is thus a

## III. 9 Who will conduct me into (the) fortified city?

Who hath led me unto Edom?

10 Hast not THOU, O God, cast us off?

And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

11 O give us help<sup>f</sup> from (the) adversary,

For vain is the salvation of man.

12 Through God shall we do valiantly;

And it is HE (who) shall tread down our adversaries.

connection between the two figures; Moab is the vessel in which he washes his feet, Edom the slave to whom he casts his shoe which he has just drawn off.

CRY ALOUD. I have left the word in its ambiguity. As it is elsewhere used of a shout of rejoicing and triumph, it has been explained either (1) ironically, as by Kimchi, "Triumph if thou canst, it is rather for me to triumph now"; or (2) of the forced homage, the shout of welcome and gratulation extorted by the victor from the vanquished. (Comp. ii. 11; xviii. 44 [45].) Ewald and others understand it of the cry of fear and sorrow, a sense which the Hiph. of the verb has (Micah iv. 9). In the parallel passage in cviii. 10 we have the easier reading, "Over Philistia will I shout aloud," i.e. in triumph, which Hupfeld would adopt here.

9. The application of these divine promises to the present condition of the nation.

WHO WILL CONDUCT ME, as the expression of a wish apparently = "Oh for one to conduct me!"

THE FORTIFIED CITY. Comp. xxxi. 21[22]. Although the article is wanting,

still some particular city may be meant, the absence of the article being not uncommon in poetry. Hengstenberg thinks that "the wonderful rock-built city of Petra" (comp. 2 Kings xiv. 7), others that Rabbath Ammon, or Rabbath Moab, is meant; Calvin, that the noun is used collectively of fortified cities generally.

WHO HATH LED ME. The change of tense is not easily accounted for. Hengstenberg understands it as "the pret. of *faith*, which anticipates the future, and so represents the matter to itself as if God had already led forth. Delitzsch, *quis perduxerit me*, referring to xi. 3. But see introduction to the Psalm.

10. HAST NOT THOU, etc. This might also be rendered "(Wilt) not thou, O God (*who*) hast cast us off, and goest not forth," etc., there being an ellipse of the relative after the personal pronoun. (So Symm., the LXX, Vulgate, Jerome.) But in cviii. 11 [12], where the passage is repeated, it is without the pronoun, and consequently the relative cannot be understood. See also xlv. 9 [10].

12. DO VALIANTLY. Comp. cxviii. 16 and Numb. xxiv. 18.

עַל שִׁשְׁנֵי יָדָיו<sup>a</sup>. In the great darkness which envelops this and other inscriptions it is impossible to explain the words satisfactorily, but they most probably denote the measure or melody to which the Psalm was to be set. See on xlv. note <sup>a</sup>. For Michtam, see on xvi. note <sup>a</sup>.

לְלַמֵּד, "to teach," i.e. intimating that it was to be taught to the people, perhaps with reference to Deut. xxxi. 19. See also 2 Sam. i. 18. בְּתַצְוֹתָיו, "when he warred with," or perhaps, as Hengst., "when he



laid waste," from the meaning of the Kal in Jer. iv. 7. 'א' נ', Aram of the two rivers, i.e. Mesopotamia, not mentioned in 2 Sam. viii., but in David's *second* Syrian expedition (2 Sam. x.) the kings of Mesopotamia are described as vassals of the king of Zobah, and would therefore as a matter of course be engaged in both wars. The exact position of Aram of Zobah is uncertain, but it is usually supposed to lie between the Euphrates and Orontes (see Winer, *Bibl. R. W. B.*)

וַיָּשָׁב. "When Joab *returned* and smote" (not "*again* smote") on his way back, i.e. from the expedition against Zobah, as is said 2 Sam. viii. 13. There, however, *David* himself, and in 1 Chron. xviii. 12 *Abishai*, is said to have been in command of the forces; on which discrepancy Michaelis remarks, "David as king, Joab as commander-in-chief, Abishai as sent by his brother on this particular expedition, defeated the enemy."

בְּנֵיַא מֶלֶח. The Valley of Salt, according to Robinson (iii. p. 25), is a low marshy tract impregnated with salt, south of the Dead Sea, and so named from the neighboring salt-mountain on the western shore of the sea. In 2 Kings xiv. 7 the Edomites are said to have been defeated there by Amaziah, with a loss of ten thousand men. There is a discrepancy here in the title, when compared with the accounts in Samuel and Chronicles, as to the number of the slain, which in those books is estimated at eighteen thousand, whether arising from a confusion in the numbers שְׁמֹנֶה and שְׁנַיִם, or in any other way, it is impossible now to say.

הַשְׁוִיב לָנוּ. The לָ may perhaps be used, as in the later Hebrew, more especially, to mark the object. It is possible, however, that the object is to be understood; "restore *to us* (thy favor, or salvation, or the like)." Hupfeld would supply the object from the preceding verb, "Appease *thine anger* towards us," referring to the phrase הַשִּׁיב אֶה, "to let go, to appease anger," and to the similar passage, Isa. xii. 1. If, however, it is necessary to assume any object, the simplest way is to find it in the verb, הַשְׁוִיב being = "give restoration, or refreshment," to us; as in lxxii. 4, לִבְנֵי א', יוֹשִׁיעַ, "he shall give salvation to," etc. The verb here in the fut. is nearly equivalent to the imperative, though there is implied in it not only entreaty, but a confidence that the prayer will be granted, so that it might be rendered "Thou wilt restore us." See a similar instance in lxi. 2 [3].

וְהָיָה תְּרַגְּלָה. The two nouns are in apposition, and must be rendered accordingly. It is out of the question to assume that the stat. abs. is here used for the constr. There is no proof that the one ever stands for the other. The first noun is immediately subjoined to the verb as

more closely defining its action; "Thou hast given us to drink infatuation, or bewilderment, as men drink wine." So Hupfeld explains the construction, referring to lxxx. 6, "Thou hast made them feed upon weeping like bread"; 1 Kings xxii. 27, "Feed him with affliction as bread, and with affliction as water" (וַיִּמְרֵם לֶחֶם not וַיִּמְרֵם לֶחֶם); Isa. xxx. 20. But the apposition is capable of being explained in another way; for the second noun may in fact be a predicate further defining the first: "Thou has given us wine to drink which is (not wine but) bewilderment." And so Luther gives the sense very well: "Du hast uns einen Trunk Wein gegeben, dass wir taumelten." תַּרְעִלָה, lit. *staggering* as from intoxication. Comp. Isa. li. 17, "cup of staggering," here however applied to confusion and stupor of mind, the helplessness, the bewilderment, the giddiness, which made them so easily beaten down before their enemies. As Calvin, *vinum stuporis, vertiginis*, which he explains, "potio quae mentes sensu et intelligentia privat." The ancient interpreters were perplexed with the word. The LXX, οἶνον κατανύξεως; Aq., καρώσεως; Symm. (who is nearer the mark), σάλου; the Chald., לִיָּט, *cursing*; Syr., سَخْنًا لِبَسًا, *wine in the dregs*; Jerome *vinum consopiente*.

<sup>a</sup> לָהֶם נִסִּים. This may either be Hithpal. from נִסַּם — so Gesen. takes it, "to betake themselves to flight" — or Hithpo. from נָסַם, "to lift themselves up"; the participle of this last form occurs Zech. ix. 16. With the word נִס, "banner," immediately preceding, the verb would seem to be used here, in its reflexive conjugation, in the sense of gathering round the banner. According to the first rendering, the sense would be, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, not as a presage of victory, but rather of defeat, only that thy people may flee before the archers of the enemy." This, it is said, is required by the context, which speaks only of disaster and defeat. But I do not see why a transition should not be made in these words to the prayer which follows. Why may not the Psalmist find encouragement in the thought that God had given to his people a banner to which they may flock, a standard round which they may range themselves, and base upon this fact his prayer: "That thy beloved may be delivered, save," etc.? For the position of the *Selah*, comp. lvii. 4.

<sup>e</sup> מִפְּנֵי קִשְׁט. This has been rendered "because of the truth," i.e. on behalf of it, in order to defend it; as Maurer, *dimicaturi pro sacris avitis*. The word קִשְׁט does indeed occur parallel with אֱמִת, Prov. xxii. 21, and the Chald. קִשְׁט in the same sense, Dan. ii. 47; iv. 34. But מִפְּנֵי cannot mean "because of, for the sake of," like דְּבַר בְּקִבּוּר, etc. Delitzsch indeed argues that it has the sense of *propter*, not only in

later Hebrew, as Neh. v. 15, but in earlier, as in Deut. xxviii. 20, but neither passage is really in point. In the one "*because of the fear of God*," and in the other "*because of the wickedness of your doings*," the prep. really = "owing to"; but here "*because of the truth*" does not mean "*owing to the truth*," but *for the sake of it*. Maurer with no better success appeals to Isa. x. 27. He suggests, indeed, another explanation, taking קָשָׁט in the sense of *fides*, — "*Propter fidem*, ut promissa tua impleres, i.e. tu ipse ut solveres promissum de exilio nos reduxisti" (he supposes the Psalm to have been written after the Exile). But it is far better, following the LXX, Syr., Ar., Symm., Jerome, Vulg., to take קָשָׁט here as = קֶשֶׁת. The interchange of the ת and ט may be seen in the Syr. ܩܝܫܬܐ and the Chald. ܩܝܫܬܐ, and the prep. will then retain its usual signification (comp. Isa. xxxi. 8). The rendering of the Syr. transl. (who must have read לֵא רָגִישִׁי) gives really the best sense: "Thou hast given to them that fear thee a banner, that they should *not* flee from before the bow."

<sup>f</sup> קֶשֶׁת. On the form of this word with termination *ath*, see on xvi. note <sup>k</sup>.

## PSALM LXI.

THE title of this Psalm ascribes it to David, but does not say under what circumstances it was composed (though according to the Syriac version it was when Jonathan revealed to him Saul's design to slay him). There is no reason to doubt that David was the author, and the language of verse 2 renders it probable that it was written when he was shut out from the sanctuary, and therefore either during his persecution by Saul or during the rebellion of Absalom. Verse 4 makes the latter the more probable occasion. At a time when the tabernacle had itself no settled resting-place, the wish to dwell and abide in it, as Delitzsch has rightly remarked, is not so natural as afterwards, when the ark was fixed on Mount Zion.

Again, if, as is most probable, the king spoken of in verse 6 is David, — Bishop Colenso's suggestion that Saul is meant is violently improbable, — then it is clear that the Psalm must have been written after he was king, and therefore in his flight from Absalom, and on the other side of the Jordan. Or if it be thought that David would not thus speak of himself in the third person, the Psalm may still have been

composed under the same circumstances, by one of the friends who accompanied him.

It consists of two principal divisions, verses 1-5 and verses 6-8. But these again admit of sub-divisions.

I. First, we have the usual introduction (ver. 1).

Then, the prayer, and the ground on which it rests (ver. 2, 3).

Then, the ardent wish to dwell in the sanctuary of God, accompanied by the reason for such a wish (ver. 4, 5).

II. Hopes expressed concerning the king (ver. 6, 7).

Finally, the usual conclusion, the vow of grateful praise (ver. 8).

[For the Precentor. On a Stringed Instrument.\* (A Psalm) of David.]

I. 1 HEAR, O God, my cry,

Give ear unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth unto thee do I call, when my heart is overwhelmed :

To a rock which is too high for me, thou wilt lead me.

3 For thou hast been a refuge for me,

A strong tower from the face of (the) enemy.

4 Let me sojourn in thy tabernacle for ever,

Let me find refuge in the hiding-place of thy wings.

[Selah.]

2. FROM THE END OF THE EARTH. A strong hyperbolical expression by which the sacred poet would describe his own *sense* of his distance from the sanctuary, or from the Holy Land. Comp. Isa. v. 26. The feeling is that which is expressed in xlii. 6 [7], and other Psalms.

IS OVERWHELMED, or "fainteth." The verb means literally "to cover," as in lxxiii. 6; "hence to cover one's face in sorrow," and then, as here, "to be overwhelmed with distress."

TO A ROCK; lit. "Upon a rock," the full construction being, "Thou wilt lead me to, and place me upon," etc. (Lee, *Heb. Gram.* § 230, 8). The rock is a place of security (comp. xl. 2 [3]; but it is one which he cannot reach by his own unaided effort.

THOU WILT LEAD ME. The words

may be either thus rendered as an expression of confidence (future), or as a prayer (imperative). See on ix. 1 [3]. There is the same ambiguity in verse 6.

3. This appeal to God is now based, as commonly in the Psalms, on the past experience of his mercy.

A STRONG TOWER, as in Judges ix. 51; Prov. xviii. 10, "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower."

4. LET ME SOJOURN. See notes on xv. 1; xxvii. 4.

IN THY TABERNACLE, or "tent." The expression would hardly have been employed after the Temple was built; and hence it is almost certain that the Psalm belongs to the time of David. See xv. 1.

FOR EVER; lit. "(for) ages." Comp. xxiii. 6.



5 For thou, O God, has hearkened to my vows,  
 Thou hast given (me) the possession<sup>b</sup> of them that  
 fear thy name.

II. 6 Thou wilt grant the king a long life,  
 His years (wilt thou make) as many generations.  
 7 He shall sit (on his throne) for ever before God ;  
 Loving-kindness and truth do thou appoint<sup>c</sup> to pre-  
 serve him.  
 8 So let me sing of thy name for ever,  
 That I may pay my vows day by day.

**THY WINGS.** The figure is borrowed, as the parallelism shows, from the outstretched wings of the cherubim over the mercy-seat. See lvii. 1 [2].

5. **THE POSSESSION.** Primarily this would be the land of Canaan, and then it would include all blessings, temporal and spiritual, which were in fact implied and comprised in the possession of the land.

6. **THOU WILT GRANT**, etc. ; lit. "Days to the king's days wilt thou add." The king, according to the Targum, is the King Messiah. The eternal duration of the kingdom here anticipated, no doubt

led to this interpretation. But in the original sense of the passage, not merely an individual monarch, but the *dynasty*, the whole royal house of David, may be meant. But see note on xxi. 4. The king is spoken of in the third person, but the Psalm may nevertheless have been written by David himself.

7. **HE SHALL SIT.** The verb may only signify "He shall *abide, dwell*," but when spoken of kings and judges it is commonly employed in the more formal and solemn sense of sitting on the throne, the judgment-seat, etc.

<sup>a</sup> עַל־נִגְיָתָהּ. Kimchi observes, "although the noun is with a Pathach, it is not in the constr. state, and there are many like instances." So too Delitzsch considers it a feminine ending in *ath*, somewhat rare in Hebrew, but the usual one in Phenician. Comp. הַבְּמֶה, Isa. xxxiii. 6. Otherwise we must read נִגְיָתָהּ, as in the title of Psalm iv.

<sup>b</sup> יְרֵשָׁתָהּ. The older versions all render, "Thou hast given a heritage to them that fear thy name." And so Maurer, but not Ewald, as Hupfeld asserts, who stigmatizes the rendering as ungrammatical. But surely that depends on how far we press the meaning of נִתְּנָהּ. It may be rendered, "Thou hast *appointed* (not necessarily *given*) the possession of them that fear," etc., which comes to the same thing as "Thou hast given a possession to them," etc.

<sup>c</sup> מִן, apoc. imperat. Piel of מָנָה. (For similar forms see cxix. 18 ; Lev. vi. 2). The Chald. renders it, "from the Lord of the world," and therefore perhaps read מִן יְהוָה. The LXX, Syr., and Arab. take the word as an interrogative pronoun, which it is in Aram., but not in Hebrew.

## PSALM LXII.

THIS Psalm and the thirty-ninth are Psalms which, though very different in their subject, yet are so similar in the phraseology which they employ, that there can be no doubt that they were written by the same author. Ewald supposes, from the eleventh [twelfth] verse of this Psalm, that he was a prophet, and one of the great supporters of true religion in the struggle with the corrupt men of his time. We see him here, he says, contending with men, his fellow-citizens, who, upheld and favored by a worldly power which was just starting into fresh life, endeavored for this very reason to drag him down into the dust, because they could not endure his spiritual greatness and superiority. Long had they attacked him; now they felt sure of his overthrow. But, strong in his trust in God, though assailed and threatened afresh, the divine poet places himself, in calm resignation, in the hands of the one true Redeemer, and not only finds in him, rest, refreshment, strength for himself, but is also enabled to encourage, enlighten, and comfort others.

Scarcely anywhere do we find faith in God more nobly asserted, more victoriously triumphant; the vanity of man, of human strength and riches, more clearly confessed; courage in the midst of peril more calm and more unshaken, than in this Psalm, which is as forcible in its conception and its language, as it is remarkable for the vigorous and cheerful piety which it breathes.

Donne, in his sermon on verse 9, says that Athanasius "observes in the Psalm a summary abridgment of all; for of this Psalm he says in general, *Adversus insidiantes*, against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame, temptations, tribulations, machinations, defamations, say this Psalm . . . not that therein David puts himself to weigh particular temptations and tribulations, but that he puts every man, in every trial, to put himself wholly upon God, and to know, that if man cannot help him in this world, nothing can; and for man, *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity.*"—Sermon lxxv.; Works, vol. iii. p. 137 (Alford's ed.).

The Psalm consists of three strophes of four verses each. The first two express the blessedness and security of trust in God when enemies assail, verses 1-4 and verses 5-8. The last places in forcible contrast with this the folly of reliance on man, verses 9-12.

[For the Precentor. After the manner of Jeduthun.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm of David.]

- I. 1 ONLY upon God my soul (waiteth in) silence,<sup>b</sup>  
 From him (cometh) my salvation.  
 2 Only he is my rock and my salvation,  
 My high tower, (so that) I cannot be greatly<sup>c</sup> moved.  
 3 How long will ye rush<sup>d</sup> against a man,  
 Will ye all of you break (him) down,<sup>e</sup>  
 As (though he were) a bowing wall, a tottering fence?<sup>f</sup>  
 4 Only from his dignity have they taken counsel to thrust  
 him down,

1. ONLY. The particle may be so rendered as restrictive; or, *surely*, as affirmative. It occurs no less than six times in the Psalm. In xxxix. 5, 6 [6, 7], it is repeated three times in three successive lines, one of the indications that the two Psalms are by the same author. Our translators have rendered it differently in different verses of this Psalm: in verse 1, *truly*; in verse 2, 4, 5, 6, *only*; in verse 9, *surely*; but it is better to keep the same word throughout, at least in the same Psalm. If we render *only*, the meaning will be here that God exclusively is the object of trust; if *surely*, that this truth, that God is his salvation, has come home to him with a more lively conviction, with a more blessed certainty, than ever. Hupfeld thinks that in verse 4 [5] the rendering *surely* is necessary, and therefore that this is to be preferred throughout; on the other hand, in verse 5 [6], *only* is certainly more suitable.

The first line of the verse rendered literally is, "Only unto God my soul is silence," i.e. is hushed into perfect resignation before him, simply trusting in his love, and leaving all that concerns me to the disposal of his fatherly will. "It is," says Calvin, "that settled submission, when the faithful rest in the promises of God, give place to his word, obey his rule, and keep down every murmur of passion in their hearts." But this, as he also remarks most truly, is the result, not of one only, but of

many struggles with the temptations of Satan.

2. MY SALVATION. The repetition of the word is not without meaning. Not only does his salvation *come from* God, but God *is* his salvation. The being on whom he waits, the loving person in whom he trusts, the God whose arms compass him about, is to him all that is comprehended in that great word salvation. He heaps these epithets upon God, says Calvin, that he may use them as so many shields against the assaults of Satan.

3. Having thus strengthened himself in his God, the Psalmist turns to address his enemies. The form of the address is very similar to that in iv. 2 [3]. There, they are men who would turn his glory (i.e. his kingly dignity) into shame, as here they would thrust him down from his high place. There too, as here, they have pleasure in lies. But here the circumstance "that they bless with their mouth, but curse inwardly," points to men who had worn the courtier's mask of a smooth hypocrisy, in order to conceal the better their designs against his life and honor, but who had thrown it off, as soon as they found that they could do so with safety. When he was in peril, when he seemed to be already tottering to his fall, like a wall shaking and giving way, then they were ready to finish the work by thrusting him down altogether.

4. EACH ONE WITH HIS MOUTH. As

They (who) have pleasure in lies,  
 (Who) bless (each one) with his mouth, and curse  
 inwardly. [Selah.]

II. 5 Only upon God wait in silence, O my soul,

For from him is my hope.

6 Only he is my rock and my salvation,

My high tower, (so that) I cannot be moved.

7 Upon God (resteth) my salvation and my glory;

The rock of my strength, my refuge, is in God.

8 Trust in him, at all times, O people;

Pour out your hearts before him.

God is a refuge for us. [Selah.]

the pronominal suffix is singular, it must be thus rendered distributively. Comp. Isa. ii. 20; v. 23.

5. WAIT IN SILENCE. The first strophe opens with the expression of his resignation; this, with the exhortation to resignation. But this is no contradiction. The life of man's spirit cannot always preserve the same even tenor. The heart of man is like the sea; however calm and smooth it may seem, a light air will ruffle its surface. The resignation, the trust in God, the peace, the rest which have come after long struggle and much prayer, may too easily be broken. And hence, when these have been attained, we need to exhort ourselves to them in renewed measure.

FOR FROM HIM IS MY HOPE. "He never disappoints the patient abiding of his children. There is laid up, he says, a sure reward for my silence, and therefore will I restrain myself, lest my haste should hinder the course of my salvation." — *Calvin*.

6, 7. Still further he strengthens himself in God, and again heaps up one expression upon another, that he may, as it were, feel how safe and sure the ground is under him, how little reason he has to be disquieted, whatever man may do unto him. (See note on ver. 2.) Then having thus encouraged himself, he turns to encourage others. On these reiterated names of God, *Donne* beauti-

fully observes, in the Sermon before quoted: "Twice in this Psalm hath he repeated this, in the second and in the sixth verse, *He is my rock, and my salvation, and my defence*, and (as it is enlarged in the seventh verse) *my refuge and my glory*. If my *refuge*, what enemy can pursue me? If my *defence*, what temptation shall wound me? If my *rock*, what storm shall shake me? If my *salvation*, what melancholy shall deject me? If my *glory*, what calumny shall defame me? . . . Let him that is pursued with any particular temptation, invest God, as God is a *refuge*, a sanctuary. Let him that is buffeted with the messengers of Satan, battered with his own concupiscence, receive God, as God is his *defence* and target. Let him that is shaken with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold upon God, as God is his *rock* and his anchor. Let him that hath any diffident jealousy or suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his *salvation*; and him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God as his *glory*. Any of these notions is enough to any man, but God is all these, and all else that all souls can think, to every man." — *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 154, 155.

7. UPON GOD. Comp. vii. 10 [11], "My shield is upon God."

8. O PEOPLE. This may either mean



III. 9 Only a breath are men of low degree, men of high degree a lie ;

In the balances they kick the beam,<sup>g</sup> lighter than a breath altogether.

10 Trust not in oppression, and in robbery be not vain ;

When wealth increaseth, set not (your) heart (thereon).

11 Once hath God spoken ; twice have I heard this ;

That strength (belongeth) unto God.

12 And to thee, O Lord, (belongeth) loving-kindness,

For THOU rewardest every man according to his work.

men generally, or the people of Israel in particular ; or, if the Psalm be David's, it may refer to his immediate followers. The word is used in this sense of *retainers*, *followers*, etc., (Judges iii. 18 ; 1 Kings xix. 21. These he exhorts to faith and prayer, that, like himself, they may learn the lesson of patience ; and as in verse 7 he had claimed God as his own refuge, now he assures them that he is their refuge as well — God is a refuge for us.

9. In vivid contrast to that sure help and refuge which are to be found in God, the Psalmist now places the weakness and worthlessness of man's strength and man's resources.

A BREATH. Symm. ἀτμός. Comp. with this and the next verse, note on xxxix 5, 6, and the passage there quoted from St. James.

MEN OF LOW DEGREE, etc. ; lit. " sons of (common) men, sons of (great) men." Comp. xlix. 2 [3].

10. BE NOT VAIN, i.e. put not a fool-

ish trust in. The verb is a very expressive one, from the same root as the word rendered "breath" above. Comp. Jer. ii. 5.

11. In conclusion, the sacred poet solemnly confirms his previous exhortation by an appeal to God's revelation.

ONCE . . . TWICE, i.e. many times. Comp. Job xxxiii. 14 ; xl. 5. And this is the substance of the revelation, that God is both a God of power and a God of love. If we need strength, we shall find it not in man, who is but as a fleeting vapor, but in God, who is Almighty. If we covet a reward, let us seek it not in robbery or in riches, but from the loving hand of him who rewardeth every man according to his work. (Comp. Rom. ii. 6.) This is the only truly worthy representation of God. Power without love is brutality, and love without power is weakness. Power is the strong foundation of love, and love is the beauty and the crown of power.

<sup>a</sup> יְדוּתָן. See xxxix. note <sup>a</sup>. The prep. על here makes it doubtful whether the *person* of that name be meant. Hence Mendelssohn following Rashi, supposes it to be the name of a musical instrument invented by Jeduthun, and so called after his name.

<sup>b</sup> דְּוִמָּה. Some, as Gesen. and Stier, take the word as an adj., after the analogy of בּוֹרֶחַ, פּוֹרֶחַ, but then it ought to be דְּוִמָּה. It is better therefore to take it here as a subst. (as it is in xxii. 3 ; xxxix. 3, and lxxv. 2) the form having the same analogy to דְּוִמָּה as עֲלִילָה, Jer. xxxii. 19, to עֲלִילָה ; but I do not see that it is necessary to consider it an accus. abs., as Hupfeld does, in *Schweigen*, much less is there any

ellipse of בָּ, as Phillips supposes; the noun is forcibly put in apposition with נַפְשִׁי, “my soul is silence,” i.e. is hushed in absolute resignation, waiting upon God. Comp. cix. 4, נָאֲנִי תַפִּלָּה, “but I am prayer.” i.e. give myself only to prayer.

<sup>c</sup> רָבָה. An adv., as perhaps Job xxxi, 34, and as רַבָּה, lxv. 10, and elsewhere. Kimchi and others take it as an adj., supplying a noun מִיָּטָה, from the verb אָמוּט.

<sup>d</sup> הַחֹחֶה occurs nowhere else. The old attempts to derive it from חָח and from חוּחַ (as Kimchi explains, חֲחֹשֶׁב הַחוּחַ, whence the E. V. *devise mischief*) are contrary to every rule of language, and, as Delitzsch observes, could only belong to the childhood of Hebrew grammar. Most probably the root is kindred with the Arab. هَتِهَت هِت, prop. *to speak in a rapid, broken, disorderly manner*, and then *to break*, etc. The Chald., renders, “will ye be tumultuous?” The Syr., “are ye incited or provoked?” The LXX, ἐπιτίθεσθε; Vulg., *irruitis*; Aq., ἐπιβουλεύετε; Jerome, *insidiamini*; Symm., *ματαιοπονήσετε*.

<sup>e</sup> תִּרְצָחִי. According to the reading of Ben-Asher, which is followed by the Western Jews, this is for the Pual, תִּרְצָחוּ, which is given by Baer in his text. So Aben-Ezra and Kimchi, and so the E. V. The reading of Ben-Naphtali, which is adopted by the Eastern Jews, is the Piel, תִּרְצָחוּ, and this is expressed by most of the ancient versions. The LXX, φονεύετε; Vulg., *interficitis*. Similarly the Syr. and Ethiop. The reading of the text without the Dagesh, and with the vowel Kametz, is peculiar. The Kametz cannot be explained as compensating for the absence of the Dagesh (as Ewald, § 83, c, and Luzzatto, § 417, suppose), because there is no Metheg. Hence it must be read *trots'chu*, which would make it a Poel form, like *m'loshni*, ci. 5.

As regards the meaning of the word, רָצַח signifies commonly *to slay*, but here it seems to be used in the original sense of the root *to break down*. Comp. the noun רָצַח in this sense in xlii. 11.

<sup>f</sup> גִּדְרֵי הַחַיִּיחָה. As the noun is elsewhere masc., and the art. prefixed to the part. when the noun is indefinite (though not contrary to grammatical rule) is unnecessary, and deviates from the constr. in the parall. קִיר נ', it is perhaps better to read (with Olsh., Hupfeld, and Delitzsch) גִּדְרֵי הַחַיִּיחָה.

<sup>g</sup> לַעֲלוֹת. The infin. constr. with ל is used here for the imperf. (according to Gesen. § 132, 3, Rem. 1), or, as Delitzsch more exactly puts it, serves to express the future periphrastically. See xv. 14 [15], note <sup>g</sup>; xlix. 15; Hab. i. 17. It marks intention, purpose, etc. Our own idiom is similar in such phrases as, he is *for going*, etc. So here, “(When laid) in the balances (they are) ascending,” i.e. will certainly go up,

kick the beam. Hupfeld contends that עָלָה does not refer to the *going, up* of the lighter scale of the balance, but to the *putting (up) into the balance* of the object to be weighed. The verb נָשָׂא is so used, e.g. Job vi. 2, and see Gesen. *Thesaur.* in v. Hence he would explain, “when they are *laid* in, or *weighed* in the balance.” לָעֲלֹה, he observes, may be taken, as often, as a gerund: “*beim Aufsteigen* (ascendendo) d. i. indem sie aufgelegt werden.” And so he renders: “*Auf Wagschalen gehoben, sind sie leichter,*” etc. This is no doubt a possible rendering, but the reasons he gives for rejecting the other are strangely weak; they are (1) that the dual is used, whereas only *one scale* of the balance goes up; (2) that in what follows there is no meaning, without doing violence to the accents, or arbitrarily supplying something, and even then only an artificial meaning. But in answer to (1) it is sufficient to say, that the Hebrew has no singular to express one scale of the balance; and in answer to (2), that only the same word of comparison is supplied which Hupfeld himself is obliged to supply when he renders, “sie sind *leichter* als ein Hauch.” The deviation from the accents is not of any great moment, but it may be avoided by taking the two clauses separately:

In the balances they ascend;

(They are lighter) than a breath altogether.

The last clause, moreover, need not be rendered as comparative; מְהֶבֶל may mean, “*of*, i.e. consisting of, a breath,” or “*of* nothing,” “breath-like.” Comp. Isa. xl. 17; xli. 24, where there is a similar ambiguity, though Isa. xlv. 11 is, as Delitzsch remarks, in favor of the last rendering. So also Symm., αὐτοὶ ματαιοῦνται ὁμῶς; LXX, ψευδεῖς οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν ζυγοῖς τοῦ ἀδικῆσαι, αὐτοὶ ἐκ ματαιότητος ἐπιτοαυτοῦ.

## PSALM LXIII.

THIS is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and touching Psalms in the whole Psalter. Donne says of it: “As the whole book of Psalms is *oleum effusum* (as the spouse speaks of the name of Christ), an ointment poured out upon all sorts of sores, a cerecloth that supple all bruises, a balm that searches all wounds; so are there some certain Psalms that are imperial Psalms, that command over all affections, and spread themselves over all occasions,—catholic, universal Psalms, that apply themselves to all necessities. This is one of those; for of those constitutions which are called Apostolical, one is, that the church should meet every day to sing this Psalm. And, accordingly, St. Chrysostom testifies, ‘That it was decreed and ordained by the

primitive fathers that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm.” And again he observes, that “the spirit and soul of the whole Book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm.” — *Sermon* lxvi.; *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 156, 157.

In many respects the Psalm bears a striking resemblance to Ps. lxi., and both Ewald and Maurer observe that the two must clearly be referred to the same circumstances and the same author. That the author was David I see no reason to doubt. Characterized as it is by an exquisite tenderness and a deep personal affection towards God, and yet not wanting, withal, in energy, and even a certain abruptness of expression, it bears all the marks of his poetry. According to the inscription, it was written in the wilderness of Judah, which would seem to intimate that it was written during his persecution by Saul (comp. 1 Sam. xxii. 5; see also xxiii. 14, 15, 24, 25; xxiv. 2). But against this is verse 11, where David, as in lxi., speaks of himself in the third person, and speaks of himself as king. Hence it is more probable that the Psalm was composed when he was on the other side of the Jordan, in his flight from Absalom. The very tenderness and depth of feeling which characterize it, and which it has in common with xlii., are what might be looked for in a heart sorely wounded and tried in its natural affections, and therefore cleaving with the more intense, devoted love to him of whom it could say: “Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I shout for joy.”

It is remarkable that in this Psalm, as in the last, there is no petition. There is gladness, there is praise, there is the most exalted communion with God, there is longing for his presence as the highest of all blessings; but there is not one word of asking for temporal, or even for spiritual good.

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions:

I. The longing of the heart for God, and the joy of the heart in communion with him (ver. 1–8).

II. The anticipated destruction of his enemies, and his own triumph in consequence (ver. 9–11).

[A Psalm of David. When he was in the Wilderness of Judah.<sup>a</sup>]

I. 1 O God, thou art my God, earnestly do I seek thee;  
     My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh pineth<sup>b</sup> for thee,  
     In a dry and weary<sup>c</sup> land (where) no water is.

1. I SEEK THEE, not as the E.V. which signifies “the dawn, the early morning,” and the verb “to seek,” are



- 2 So<sup>d</sup> in the sanctuary have I gazed upon thee,  
 To see thy power and thy glory;  
 3 For thy loving-kindness is better than life;  
 My lips shall praise thee.  
 4 So will I bless thee, while I live,  
 In thy name will I lift up my hands.

both from the same root, and are both to be referred to the same primitive idea. The meaning of the root is *to break in*, and hence this in the verb passes into the signification of *seeking* (earnestly), and in the noun *the dawn* is so called as that which *breaks in* upon the darkness.

My FLESH, i.e. "my body," answering to "my soul" in the parallelism, and so describing the whole man. Comp. xvi. 8 [9]. So again, lxxxiv. 2 [3], "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." In that intense worship in which every thought, feeling, desire, affection are centered in the one true object of love, body and soul both take their part. It is as a living man, every pulse of his being filled with the love of God, that he responds to that love. And when he cries out "O God, thou art my God," this is not merely an appropriation of God as the God of his worship and trust; it is the *heart of flesh* stretching out *its human affections* towards him who has a personal affection for his creature, and whose loving-kindness it knows to be better than life.

IN A DRY AND WEARY LAND. Some understand this literally, as describing the wilderness of Judah in which David was, according to the title of the Psalm. Others suppose that the language is figurative, and expresses the spiritual thirst and weariness of one who is shut out from God's presence in the sanctuary. (In this last case a comparison is implied, with the not uncommon omission of the particle of comparison; Symm. has *ὡς ἐν γῆ, κ.τ.λ.*; see on xlvi. 7 [8].) There can be no doubt that the last is the true interpretation. Nevertheless, the figure may perhaps have been suggested by the natural objects which immediately surrounded the Psalmist, as afterwards the allusion to the jackals (ver. 10)

2. So; that is, with the same ardent desire, etc. See Critical Note.

THY POWER AND THY GLORY. The special manifestation of these attributes was in the holy place. Comp. lxxviii. 61, where God is said to have given his power and his beauty (= glory here) into the adversary's hand, when the ark was taken: see also 1 Sam. iv. 21, where *the glory* of God in like manner is identified with the ark.

3. FOR. According to some, the particle gives the reason for the longing (ver. 1). According to others, it refers immediately to the last clause of verse 2. "To see thy power and thy glory, *for* thy loving-kindness," etc., this third attribute of God being inseparable from the other two, so that they who see his power and glory, see his loving-kindness also. But as verse 2 is quasi-parenthetical, I think the first explanation of the use of the particle the more probable. Hupfeld would transpose the clauses again, as in the preceding verse: My lips shall praise thee, For, etc. And so Mendels. But this is hardly necessary. The rendering of our own version may perhaps be defended. See Gen. iii. 14, 17, where in like manner the causal sentence with *בְּ*, *because*, precedes.

LIFE, in all the fulness of its earthly meaning. Life, and all the blessings of life, as they are commonly enjoyed (as Calvin, "Omnia media quibus statum suum teneant homines, terrena subsidia"). Comp. xvii. 13 [14]; Jer. viii. 3.

4. So, i.e. either with the same yearning affection, with the same heart of love and thanksgiving; or, *accordingly, consequently* (because of thy loving-kindness), as in lxi. 8 [9]. There is no reason to take the *so* in this verse as answering to the *so* in verse 2. The connection be-

- 5 As (with) marrow and fatness shall my soul be satisfied,  
And (with) lips of joyful shouting my mouth shall  
praise (thee).
- 6 When<sup>e</sup> I have remembered thee upon my bed,  
In the night-watches I meditate upon thee.
- 7 For thou hast been a help unto me,  
And in the shadow of thy wings will I shout for joy.
- 8 My soul hath followed hard after thee,  
Thy right hand hath upholden me.

tween the first four verses is not very exact, but may be traced as follows: My soul longeth for thee (ver. 1). With the same longing with which I now desire to see thee, I once did see thee in thy sanctuary (ver. 2). This longing is because of thy loving-kindness, which is more precious than all else (ver. 3). Accordingly, I will praise thee all my life long (ver. 4).

WHILE I LIVE; lit. "in, during, my life"; not as Hengstenberg "when brought back to life, or to salvation."

IN THY NAME, see xx. 1 [2], 5 [6]; liv. 1 [3]. On the lifting up of the hands, as the gesture of prayer, see xxviii. 2.

5. AS WITH MARROW AND FATNESS, an image borrowed from a rich and splendid banquet. Cf. xxii. 26 [27], 29 [30]; xxiii. 5, 6. Hupfeld, following J. H. Michaelis, thinks that the reference is immediately to the sacrificial meal which accompanied the thank-offering, here used as an image of thanksgiving (comp. l. 13 [14]; liv. 6 [8], etc.), and that the comparison is between his delight in rendering thanksgiving to God, and the enjoyment of the fat of the sacrifices. But the simpler explanation is the more probable. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 14; Isa. xxv. 6; Jer. xxxi. 14.

LIPS OF JOYFUL SHOUTING, or lips of jubilee.

6. WHEN I HAVE REMEMBERED . . . I MEDITATE. The heart having begun to occupy itself with the thought of God and his goodness, recalling all his loving-kindness in past times, continues to dwell upon it through the hours of the night.

IN THE NIGHT-WATCHES, i.e. the whole night through. According to the Old Testament division, there were three watches. (Comp. Lam. ii. 19; Judges vii. 19; Ex. xiv. 24.) According to the Roman reckoning, which we find in the New Testament, four.

7. On this verse Donne remarks: "Now as the spirit and soul of the whole Book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm, so is the spirit and soul of the whole Psalm contracted into this verse." — *Sermon lxvi.* vol. iii. p. 157. It embraces, as he observes, the "whole compass of time, past, present, and future"; David, in the present distress, finding support in the past, and from that sure ground looking forward with confidence and joy to the future.

IN THE SHADOW OF THY WINGS. Comp. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7 [8]; lvii. 1 [2]; lxi. 4 [5]. That which David "promises himself, is not an immunity from all powerful enemies, nor a sword of revenge upon those enemies [but see ver. 10]; it is not that he shall have no adversary, nor that the adversary shall be able to do him no harm, but that he should have a refreshing, a respiration, *in velamento alarum*, under the shadow of God's wings." — *Donne*, p. 170.

8. The verse describes the mutual relation of the soul and God. The soul follows after God and cleaves to him (the expression in the Hebrew is literally, "my soul hath cleaved after thee," so that the two ideas of following and cleaving are mingled); and God, on the other hand, stays and upholds the soul with his right hand. Out of that

- II. 9 But *they* to (their own) destruction<sup>f</sup> seek my soul ;  
 They shall go into the lower parts of the earth,  
 10 They shall be given over<sup>g</sup> to the power of the sword,  
 A portion for jackals shall they become.  
 11 But the king shall rejoice in God :  
 Every one that sweareth by him shall boast himself ;  
 For the mouth of them that speak falsehood shall be  
 stopped.

hand of power and love neither man nor devil can pluck it.

9. Upon our modern feelings and thoughts this and the next verse seem, perhaps, somewhat to jar. We pass all at once into a different atmosphere. We have come down, as it were, from the mount of holy aspirations, into the common every-day world, where human enemies are struggling, and human passions are strong. Yet this very transition, harsh as it is, gives us a wonderful sense of reality. In some respects, it brings the Psalm nearer to our own level. The man who has been pouring out the fervent affection of his heart towards God is no mystic or recluse, lost in ecstatic contemplation, but one who is fighting a battle with foes of flesh and blood, and who hopes to see their malice defeated, their power crushed, and their carcasses left to be the prey of jackals in the wilderness. What may be called the human force of character remains even amid thoughts whose impassioned earnestness is not of this world,

and whose strain of intensely exalted spiritual fervor is such as but very few can reach.

BUT THEY. The pronoun used emphatically, as placing his enemies in sharp contrast with himself.

INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH. The expression seems here to denote Sheol or Hades. The sentiment is the same as in ix. 17 [18]; lv. 15 [16]. In cxxxix. 15 it denotes merely "darkness, obscurity." In Isa. xlv. 23 it seems to mean little more than the earth, as opposed to the heavens. The LXX, εἰς τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς. Comp. Eph. iv. 9.

11. THE KING. See introduction to the Psalm, and comp. lxi. 6 [7].

EVERY ONE THAT SWEARETH BY HIM, i.e. every one to whom God is the object of religious fear and trust and worship (comp. Deut. vi. 13; Isa. xix. 18; xlv. 23; lxxv. 16; Amos viii. 14), the Psalmist himself, and his friends and companions. Those on the other hand who, because they have no fear of God, seek to prevail by lies, shall be confounded.

<sup>a</sup> מִדְּבַר יְהוָה. "The wilderness of Judah." Here, and here only, *Midbar* appears to be synonymous with *Arabah*. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, i. 1156 b. The Chald., Aq., and Symm. follow the Hebrew text here, but the LXX have Ἰδουμαίας, and they are followed by the Arab. and Ethiop., Jerome and the Vulg. Bellarmine tries to reconcile this by supposing that the wilderness of Idumaea was the larger name, comprehending the whole region, of which a part was called "the wilderness of Judah." The difficulty attaching to the inscription, however, is, that David was in the wilderness of Judah, so far as we know, only when he fled from Saul, whereas the Psalm must clearly be

referred (see introduction) to the time of Absalom's rebellion. Tholuck (who refers to Robinson, ii. p. 495) observes that this wilderness extends along the western shore of the Dead Sea, and higher up along the west bank of the Jordan. Here David halted, waiting for news from Jerusalem, before he crossed the river, probably by the same ford, near Gilgal, by which he afterwards returned from Mahanaim.

<sup>b</sup> קָמָה. The word occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It may, however, be explained by the Syr. **ܩܡܬܐ**, which Castell explains, *caligine offusus est, excaecavit*, and the Arab. **كَمَى**, "to become dark, as the eye through blindness, the mind from faintness," etc. See Gesen. *Thesaur.* in v.

<sup>c</sup> עָרָה, adj. masc. instead of fem. (to agree with אֶרֶץ), as in the parallel passages, cxliii. 6; Isa. xxxii. 2. Similarly in other cases where two adjectives come together, the nearer agrees with the noun fem., and the more distant remains in the masc. gender. Comp. 1 Kings xix. 11, רִיחַ רִיחָהּ וְחֹפֶן; 1 Sam. xv. 9; Isa. xiv. 9, and even in the predicate, Isa. xxxiii. 9 (Gesen. § 147, Rem. 1). The difficulty, however, here is, that עָרָה is prop. a noun, not an adj. Hence some (as Ven. and Delitzsch, 2d ed.) would refer עָרָה to בְּשָׂרִי; others, as Schm. and Hengstenberg, to the subject, as a relative sentence, *ubi lapsus sum* (conf. lxviii. 10, וְיִלָּצָה).

<sup>d</sup> כֵּן. The use of this particle here is full of difficulty. *So, how?* To what does it refer? (1) Ewald: *So*, namely, as his God, has the poet seen him before in the splendor of the Temple, acknowledging and praising his glory and majesty; and *so* as his God, does he still ever bless him, the כֵּן in ver. 4 [5] thus answering to the other, and לִרְאוֹת having a gerundial sense (*videndo*); he renders:

"So hab' ich dich im Heiligthum geschaut

Erblickend deine Macht und Herrlichkeit."

(2) Oettinger: even so, i.e. with the same thirsty longing, have I gazed upon thee in the sanctuary. Very similarly Calvin: "Particulae *sic* non leve pondus inest, acsi diceret: Quamvis in hac solitudine nihil nisi triste et horridum appareat, ut ipsa loci asperitas possit obtenebrare oculos; ego tamen in gloriae et virtutis tuae intuitu me exerceo, perinde acsi in sanctuario essem." (3) Others, again, as Diod., Thol., take the particle *so* as introducing the reason of his intense longing based on past experience. "My soul longeth for thee, so (i.e. in such beauty and glory) have I seen thee in times past in the sanctuary." See the same use of כֵּן, as giving a reason, in Isa. lii. 14. (4) Luther supposes the particle *so* to describe the condition in which the Psalmist is,



sc. being in this dreary waste, thus at a distance from the sanctuary, and renders the following perf. as a present, "Daselbst sehe ich nach dir in deinem Heiligthum, wolte gerne schauen." This, at any rate, is better than to take it, with others (as Gesen.), as a future or optative, which is contrary to the plainest grammatical rules. (5) Perhaps we may, with the E. V., transpose the clauses of the verse. **וְרָאָה** then depends upon the verbs in ver. 1 [2], and **כֵּן** must be rendered *so as* = **כַּכֵּן**. So also Rashi, Mendels., Zunz, and Hupfeld, the last of whom further supposes that a like transposition of clauses has taken place in all the following verses, to the end of ver. 8 [9]; an arrangement which certainly obviates some of the grammatical difficulties of the passage. On the whole, I incline to the interpretation, "So, i.e. as I now long after thee, and desire to see thee, in the same way have I gazed at thee in the sanctuary, in order to see thy majesty," etc. The use of **כֵּן** in cxxvii. 2, is, it seems to me, very similar (see note there).

**אֵם**, here used as a particle of time, followed by the perf., as frequently, xli. 7; xciv. 18; Amos vii. 2, etc. Some, however (as Delitzsch 1st ed.), would make this clause co-ordinate with the following, and so render **אֶחָדָה** also as a past, *meditabar*. In his 2d ed. Delitzsch has the present: "wenn ich dein gedenke...sinn' ich." Others, again, would connect the clause with **אֵם** with the preceding verse. I think it better, however, to regard the first clause as the protasis, and the second as the apodosis. Symm., well, ἀναμνησκόμενός σου ἐπὶ τῆς στρωμνῆς μου, καθ' ἐκάστην φυλακὴν ἐμελέτων σε.

**יְהַמְּתָה לִשְׂוֹאָה**. The pron. with the **י** prefixed is used, as commonly, with an emphatic meaning, and may of itself denote the Psalmist's enemies, without any further description of them, the sense being clear enough from the context. It would be possible, however, to render, "But *they* (shall be) for destruction (or, doomed to destruction), *who* seek my soul," the relat. being understood in the usual way. The rendering, "They who seek my soul to destroy it," is objectionable, as inverting the order of the words in the Hebrew. The LXX express **לִשְׂוֹאָה** by εἰς μάτην, and therefore, perhaps, read **לְשׂוֹאָה**, though Hupfeld considers the one as the fem. form only of the other. **שְׂוֹאָה** means, properly, *a downfall with a crash*. Comp. xxxv. 17.

**יִצְּקֵהוּ**, lit. "they shall pour him out," which = "he shall be poured out," the act, verb being used with indefinite subject instead of the passive. See note on lviii. 7 [8]. The suffix of the pron. is used in the sing., as often, instead of the plur. (see v. 10; vii. 3), and may perhaps be explained distributively: "*Every one of them* shall be poured out, i.e. given over." On **מָה** see xi. note <sup>c</sup>; xvi. note <sup>h</sup>.

## PSALM LXIV.

THIS Psalm contains a stirring and vigorous picture of the plotting by which evil men were aiming at the Psalmist's life. It opens, as is usual in such Psalms, with a cry to God against their machinations; it describes at length the methods they take to accomplish their purposes; and it concludes with a confident prediction of their sudden and utter overthrow. We have already observed a similar strain of feeling in other Psalms, such as the fifty-second, fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth, and fifty-ninth. In all these we find allusions to the mischief done by *the tongue* of the wicked; in the last three the same figures are employed, the tongue, and its words, being compared to arrows and swords. Comp. lxiv. 3, 4 [4, 5] with lvii. 4 [5]; lviii. 7 [8]; lix. 7 [8].

The Psalm is said to be David's, and Ewald observes that it so nearly resembles Psalm vii. that one might be tempted to ascribe it to David, did not a careful comparison contradict such a supposition. But where there is this admitted resemblance, the minute criticism may very well be distrusted, and the title be suffered to stand.

The Psalm is regular in its structure, but scarcely admits of strophical division. We have, however, after the introductory petition in ver. 1, 2,

I. The description of the wicked and their devices (ver. 3-6).

II. The destruction which shall assuredly come upon them, and which shall fill the righteous with joy (ver. 7-10).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

- 1 HEAR my voice, O God, in my complaint,  
From terror of (the) enemy preserve my life.
- 2 Hide me from the conspiracy of evil-doers,  
From the throng of (the) workers of iniquity;
- 3 Who have sharpened their tongue, like a sword,  
(Who) have aimed their arrow, (even) a bitter word,
- 4 That they may shoot in (their) lurking-places at (the) perfect:  
Suddenly do they shoot at him and fear not.

2. CONSPIRACY. This word denotes any kind of familiar intercourse, but generally *secret* converse, plotting, etc. (see on xxv. note §); whereas the word **THRONG**, in the parallelism, means properly, a noisy, tumultuous assemblage. Comp. lv. 14 [15].

3. HAVE AIMED. The verb is used commonly of bending the bow, but is transferred also to the aiming of the arrow; see lviii. 7 [8]. For the figures employed, comp. lii. 3 [4].

4. AND FEAR NOT, i.e. God, who takes vengeance on the wicked (cf. lv. 19 [20]).

- 5 They strengthen themselves (in) an evil purpose ;  
 They reckon how they may lay snares privily ;  
 They say, Who shall observe them ?
- 6 They devise iniquities ;  
 They have perfected <sup>a</sup> (the) device devised (by them) ;  
 And the inward part of each (of them) and the heart is deep.
- 7 But God hath shot at them with an arrow ;  
 Suddenly have their wounds come.
- 8 And he hath made them stumble, (with) their own tongue  
 against them ; <sup>b</sup>  
 All that look upon them shake the head.

5, 6. These verses carry on the picture of the plots of these evil men, and especially describe their resolute persistence in their schemes, their confidence of success, and the depth and subtlety of their designs.

5. **THEY STRENGTHEN THEMSELVES ;** lit. "They strengthen for themselves an evil thing (word)," i.e. they take every means to secure their object, follow it up resolutely, etc.

**THEY RECKON ;** each part of their evil plot being, as it were, carefully gone over and enumerated. See the same word in like sense, lix. 12 [13] ; lxi. 26 [27].

**THEY SAY,** i.e. within themselves, they think, as the word is often used in such phrases ; for the fuller expression see x. 6.

**WHO SHALL OBSERVE THEM ?** The question is an indirect one, for which the Syriac substitutes the direct, "Who shall observe *us* ?" The pronoun *them* refers to the speakers, not to the snares. The preposition with the pronoun is not merely instead of the accusative, but marks more distinctly the *aim* of the verb. Lit. "Who shall see (look) at them," as 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

6. **THEY HAVE PERFECTED.** This word is grammatically difficult of explanation. See Critical Note.

**AND THE INWARD PART, etc.** This last clause is added loosely, as a further explanation of the character of the men. Tholuck, who supposes the Psalm to

have been written by David at the court of Saul, when he became aware of the plots by which others were seeking to injure him and traduce him to the king, sees in this clause the expression of amazement which fills the mind of the upright, honest youth, when he first becomes aware of the deep duplicity and treachery of the aspirants to royal favor, by whom he was surrounded.

7. The divine judgment is now painted as if actually fulfilling itself before the very eyes of the Psalmist. Hence the verbs are in the past tense, by which a certain dramatic effect is produced, which is lost when they are rendered in the future. So vividly is the divine judgment anticipated, that it is *as if* already accomplished. The first clause might stand thus: "But God hath shot at them with a sudden arrow," or, according to the accents, the verse might be divided as follows :

"But God hath shot at them,

(With) a sudden arrow have been  
 their wounds."

But the first of these methods of punctuation leaves the second clause strangely bare. The second has the support of the LXX, Symm., Aq., etc. But the punctuation I have adopted, which is that of Ewald and Delitzsch, is, on the whole, the best. The arrow of God (comp. vii. 12 [13] ; xxxviii. 2 [3]) thus answers to the arrow of the wicked (ver. 3).

8. **SHAKE THE HEAD.** For this mean-

9 And all men have feared,

And have declared God's doing,

And his work have they considered.

10 The righteous rejoiceth in Jehovah, and hath found refuge  
in him;

And all the upright in heart boast themselves.

ing of the verb, comp. Jer. xviii. 16; malicious triumph in looking upon suf-  
xlvi. 27; for the gesture, as one of fering, etc., see xxii. 7 [8].

<sup>a</sup> הַמְּנִי. This, as it stands, can only be for הַמְּנִי, plur. pret. of רָמַם, and must either be (1) the triumphant assertion of the wicked, glorying in the success of their plans; "They devise iniquities (saying), we have accomplished (the) device (we had) devised" [or, if רָמַם be intrans. "we are ready (with) the device," etc., or, as Hitzig, "wir sind fertig; herrlich ausgedacht"]; or (2), which is still more hard and abrupt, the complaint of the righteous, "We are cut off," i.e. without the help of God, by the devices of these men." The same form, without the connecting long vowel, and consequently with the Dagesh dropped, occurs Numb. xvii. 28 [13 E. V.], Jer. xlv. 18, and (with Kametz) Lam. iii. 22. In the first two of these passages it is certainly 1st pers. plur., and it *may be* so in the last, as it is rendered in the E. V., "It is of the Lord's mercies that *we* are not consumed." But there, as here, the 3d pers. is preferable; the difficulty, however, is to account for the form הַמְּנִי, instead of הַמְּנִי. Some, as Kimchi and Buxt., suppose the נ to stand instead of the doubling of the מ, and would defend its position as standing *after* instead of *before* the consonant which ought to be doubled, by reference to מְצִנְיָהּ for מְצִנְיָהּ, Isa. xxiii. 11. It is better, however, either to read הַמְּנִי, *they have perfected*, or, with many mss., הַמְּנִי, *they have hidden* (i.e. in their heart), and so Rashi, Luther, Ven., Död., Schnurr.

<sup>b</sup> וְנִפְּלְאוּ. Kimchi explains: "And they shall make it, viz. their tongue, fall upon themselves." For this position of the pronom. suffix in anticipation of the proper object, the noun, he refers to Ex. ii. 6; Job xxxiii. 20. But in this case the suff. ought to be fem., as the noun (*tongue*) is. The suff., if the reading is correct, can only refer to the enemies, the sing. standing for the plur. by a not unfrequent enallage of number (see on lxii. 4 [5]). Then the act. verb in 3d pers. plur. is used impersonally for the passive (comp. lxiii. 11; xlix. note <sup>i</sup>): "they (i.e. men) make them fall," = "they are made to fall," and the subjoined clause need not be considered, contrary to the accents, as an



independent clause, but may describe further the manner of their fall: "And they have been (shall be) made to fall (with) their own tongue (turned) against themselves." This gives a good sense, and describes their punishment as a righteous retribution. I prefer, however, by a very slight alteration, to read *וַיִּכְשִׁילֵהוּ*, the subject being God: "And he hath made them stumble," etc.

## PSALM LXV.

WE can hardly doubt that this Psalm was composed on the occasion of an abundant harvest, and was intended to be sung as a hymn of thanksgiving by the whole congregation gathered before God in Zion. From the allusions in verses 7, 8, it would seem that the time was one of great political convulsions, of a shaking of nations and kingdoms, in the midst of which God had manifested his goodness to his people. The Psalm connects together these two great concurrent instances of God's protecting care and love. He had given peace to Zion when her enemies were raging around her. He had crowned her with the year of his goodness when drought and famine seemed to threaten. "The hearer of prayer" had heard the petitions of his people, when they met to confess their sins and to make known their need before him; and now it was but fitting that they should gather again within his courts, there to thank him for his mercy, and to show forth all his praise.

This twofold character of the Psalm is best explained by referring it to the time immediately subsequent to the destruction of the Assyrian army before Jerusalem. An abundant harvest, it had been promised, Isa. xxxvii. 30, should follow that event; and the fields so lately trampled beneath the feet of the invader seemed now, with their waving crops, to sing and shout for joy.

The title of the Psalm assigns it to David; but it is impossible to read it, and not to feel that it bears every evidence of a later date. So strong indeed is this evidence, that even Delitzsch, who is usually a strenuous supporter of the inscriptions, abandons the tradition here, and, with Ewald, thinks that the Psalm was written about the time of Sennacherib's overthrow (i.e. about 712 B.C.)

The Psalm consists of three strophes:

I. The opening is an expression of the thoughts and feelings with which the congregation may fitly approach God, now that they come to thank him for his goodness (ver. 1-4).

II. Then follows the celebration of the mighty acts of Jehovah, both in the world of nature and also among the nations, so that his name is known and acknowledged to the ends of the earth (ver. 5-8).

III. Lastly, the special thanksgiving which is called forth by the refreshing rain which God has sent, and the rich and glorious harvest which is already waving and ripening before their eyes (ver. 9-13).

The difference between the first and last strophe in the mode of expression is striking. In the first, there is a certain abruptness. The thoughts follow one another, not indeed altogether without order, but without anything like formal cohesion. In the last, on the other hand, the language flows with the thoughts. The bright harvest-scene is before the eyes of the inspired singer. He stands looking on the fields white already to the harvest, and his soul within him rejoices in their glorious promise. The poet and the world without him are at one accord. The fulness of joy in his heart, as he sees how his God has poured blessing upon the land, passes as it were by a contagion of sunny gladness into the inanimate creation, and the very corn-fields seem to him to shout together, yea to sing for joy.

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David. A Song.]

I. 1 For thee praise waiteth,<sup>a</sup> O God, in Zion;

And unto thee is (the) vow paid.

2 O thou that hearest prayer,

Unto thee doth all flesh come.

1-4. In these verses, whilst the meaning of the separate sentences is clear, it is not equally easy to trace the line of thought. I believe it to be this: In Zion God is known, there he is praised and worshipped. He is the hearer of prayer; that is his very character, and therefore all flesh comes to him. All who feel their weakness, all who need help and grace, seek it at his hand. It is true that they who thus come, come with the burden of sin upon them; their iniquities rise up in all their strength and might, and would thrust them away from the presence of the Holy One. But he himself, in the plenitude of his mercy, covers those iniquities, will not look upon them, and so suffers sinners to approach him. And how blessed are they who, reconciled and pardoned, are thus suffered to draw

nigh. Of that blessedness may we ourselves be partakers, may we be filled and satisfied therewith.

1. WAITETH; lit. "is silent," the word being used apparently metaphorically, in the sense of *resting* and so of *waiting*. So Diodati, "laude t' aspetta in Sion." The meaning is, as Calvin observes, that God is so gracious to his people that he supplies them every day with fresh subject for praise. Others, however, explain it of the silence of the heart in devotion. See Critical Note.

IS (THE) VOW PAID. The noun in the singular here is used collectively, and may be considered as equivalent to a plural. The verb is manifestly a present, stating the actual fact.

2. O THOU THAT HEAREST PRAYER. This is the very character of God. "He

3 Iniquities<sup>b</sup> have prevailed against me,

(But) as for our transgressions, THOU coverest them.

4 Blessed<sup>c</sup> is he whom thou choosest,

And bringest near (that) he may dwell in thy courts!

Oh let us, then, be satisfied<sup>d</sup> with the blessing of thine house,

(Even) of thy holy<sup>e</sup> temple.

II. 5 (With) terrible things<sup>f</sup> in righteousness dost thou answer us, O God of our salvation,

describes not what has once happened, but clothes God with this everlasting attribute (*perpetuo ornatu*), as though he said, God can no more be deaf to the prayers of his people than he can deny himself."—*Calvin*.

UNTO THEE DOTH ALL FLESH COME. By *flesh* is meant man in his weakness and need, but the word scarcely includes here (as Hengstenberg and Hupfeld) other animals. It is clear, however, that the privilege of access to God is not intended to be confined merely to the Israelites, or so general an expression would not have been chosen. It is again, as in the last verses, the statement of a fact, true generally, true so far as men pray at all. Tholuck carries this so far as to say that even prayers offered in blindness to other gods yet reach the true God (see a similar remark in R. Cecil, *Remains*, ii. 517), and supposes these to be contrasted with the prayer offered to God in Zion. Calvin and others, who render the verbs in the future, see here a prophecy of Christ's kingdom, and of the conversion of the heathen, as in Isa. xlv. 23, 24. But the general tenor of the Psalm does not support this view.

3. INIQUITIES; lit. "things (or words) of iniquities," perhaps not merely pleonastic, but intended (as Delitzsch) to mark the several parts of the object more distinctly.

HAVE PREVAILED; lit. "have been too strong for me." Comp. xl. 12 [13]. It is the remembrance of this which brings up before the mind the one great obstacle to approach to God; the next line telling us how that obstacle is removed. Calvin well explains: "Al-

though our iniquities, as they deserve repulse, would cast us far from thy sight, yet because thou showest thyself ready to be reconciled, they will not prevent the course of our prayers." Comp. Isa. lix. 1, 2.

AGAINST ME. The pronoun of the first person singular comes in somewhat abruptly. Delitzsch thinks that the whole congregation here speak as one man. It is more probable that the Psalmist makes a personal application to himself of that which was true of all, putting his own guilt however in the first place, as Daniel also confessed his own sins first (Dan. ix. 20), and then those of the people.

THOU COVEREST. See on xxxii. 1. The pronoun is emphatic, as though to express the conviction that God, and God alone, could do this.

4. BLESSED. See notes on xv. 1; xxvii. 4. This blessedness is here felt especially as vouchsafed to God's *chosen*, as the privilege of Israel rather than of other nations ("Blessed is he whom thou choosest"), and also as flowing from the *forgiving* love of God, who covers the transgressions which else would separate from him even his *chosen*.

OH LET US BE SATISFIED. "For all that God's grace offers us we can give no better thanks than that we hunger and thirst after it, and that the poor empty soul be satisfied therewith."—*Delitzsch*.

OF THY HOLY TEMPLE; or, perhaps, "with the holiness of thy temple."

5. The Psalmist now approaches more nearly to his main subject: and first, he declares God's wonders on behalf of his

Thou (that art) the trust of all the ends of the earth,  
and of the sea afar off :

6 (Who) setteth fast (the) mountains by his strength,  
Being girded about with might ;

7 (Who) stilleth the roaring of (the) seas,  
The roaring of their waves,  
And the tumult of the nations.

8 Therefore they that dwell in the ends <sup>s</sup> (of the earth) are  
afraid at thy signs ;

people, wonders so great and so signal that all the earth has been made to know that there is a God in Israel.

TERRIBLE THINGS (as elsewhere, "great things," "wondrous things"), commonly used of God's great acts wrought in behalf of Israel, especially in their deliverance out of Egypt. (Deut. x. 21 ; 2 Sam vii. 23 ; Ps. cvi. 22 ; cxlv. 4, etc.)

DOST THOU ANSWER US, (not future "Thou *will* answer us," but) now, as at all times, when our need is sore ; IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (comp. Isa. xlii. 6), that being the very foundation of God's moral government of the world, and that righteousness being manifested in the salvation of his people as in the overthrow of their enemies ; a cloud and darkness to these, but a light and defence to those.

TRUST. "The meaning is," says Venema, "that God is the most certain help and defence of men, whether he be acknowledged by them and trusted in or not." Tholuck thinks that the congregation, "lifting up their hearts to the survey of God's wondrous works, declare the conviction that whatever of blessing and of consolation all the nations of the earth receive, issues from this source only, wherein is involved the confession, that all prayers of the heathen also, however perverted their ideas of the Deity may be, still in reality mount to the throne of the God of Israel." (See above on ver. 2.) He then refers to the testimony of the Prophet Amos (ix. 7), that the same fatherly hand which led Israel out of Egypt had also guided and blessed

heathen nations. But here, as in verse 2, it is the *claim* of God to be thus recognized and trusted in which is asserted. God is the hearer of the prayers of all. He is the only object of trust, even though all do not pray to him or trust in him. As Luther well says : "One may run over the wide world, even to its utmost extremity, yet thou art the only foundation on which the trust of a man's heart can rest." At the same time, there is an anticipation of a universal recognition and worship, such as could not but spring up in the hearts of those who were met together on such an occasion as this, to record God's wonderful works. In Ps. lxvii. this anticipation becomes more nearly predictive.

AFAR OFF. The word is properly an adjective, and may, as Hupfeld takes it, belong to the noun "ends," the construction being "the distant ends of the earth and sea." He refers to lxiv. 7 ; Isa. lxvi. 19, as compared with v. 26 ; viii. 9 ; xxxiii. 17. And so Diodati : "Confidenza di tutte l'estremità le più lontane della terra e del mare." But according to the accent the construction is "sea of the distant ones," i.e. the dwellers on distant coasts and islands.

6, 7. Mountains and seas are not to be understood figuratively, but literally, the statement being that the same God who stills the earthquake and hushes the storm gives peace also to contending kingdoms and nations. Both in the natural and the political world he rules. The *sea* and the *nations* are mentioned together, the one being so often used as an image of the other. See xlv.



Thou makest the outgoings<sup>h</sup> of the morning and evening  
to sing for joy.

III. 9 Thou hast visited the earth, and made it overflow,<sup>i</sup>  
Thou greatly enrichest it (with) the brook of God,  
(which is) full of water;  
Thou preparest their corn,  
For so dost thou prepare it (i.e. the earth).

8. THEREFORE. I have thus rendered the *Vau consec.* as marking the consequence; lit. "and (accordingly) they have feared."

SIGNS. In like manner *σημεῖον* is used in the New Testament of miracles as "tokens and indications of the near presence and working of God" (Trench). Or as Basil says: *ἔστι σημεῖον πρᾶγμα φανερόν κεκρυμμένου τινὸς καὶ ἀφανοῦς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν δῆλωσιν ἔχον*. Calvin: "Opera Dei insignia, quibus gloriae suae notas insculpsit"; and then observing that all God's works, those which appear to us the most ordinary or the least, do still manifest him, he adds: "miraculis κατ' ἐξοχήν tribuitur hoc nomen, quia illic clarius refulget Dei majestas."

OUTGOINGS, or rather *the places where morning and evening have their birth* ("les lieux d'où surgissent l'aube et le crépuscule," Perret-Gentil; "portals," Kay), the east and west; the meaning being, that all things, the inanimate as well as the animate creatures, from the rising to the setting of the sun, break forth into songs of joy before God.

Briefly, verses 5-8 may be summed up thus: the whole wide world, its mountains and its seas, and all the dwellers in the world from one end of it to the other, are in the hand of God, wait upon him, and he makes all to rejoice.

9. With this verse begins the special subject of thanksgiving, the thanksgiving for the harvest. It is manifest, from the use of the *perfect tenses* in verses 9, 11, 13, that this is not merely a general acknowledgment of God's goodness in bringing the fruits of the earth to maturity, but has reference to a particular season.

THOU HAST VISITED THE EARTH; or

perhaps "the land." Comp. Jer. xxvii. 22. On this Arndt (quoted by Hengstenberg) says: "The Holy Spirit makes use of a homely word when, in describing the fertilizing, genial rain, he terms it a visiting of the earth. When a visit is made by rich and affectionate friends, they do not come empty, but bring with them a blessing or good gift to testify their favor and love. Thus, although God is over all, and fills heaven and earth, he does not at all times leave traces or marks of his presence. But when in time of drought he gives a gracious, fertilizing shower, it is as if he paid us a visit, and brought along with him a great blessing, that we might mark his love and goodness."

THE BROOK OF GOD, not as the Chald. and others "the clouds," but rather "the rain." The Arabs have the same expression. Schultens quotes from *Hist. Tamerl.*, p. 82, the Arabic proverb: "When the river of God comes, the river Isa (in Bagdad) ceases." It is the heavenly stream as opposed to earthly streams; called a *brook* or *channel* (see on i. 3) with reference to the irrigation of the land by means of such. It is full of water, whereas the wells which men dig, the channels which they cut, dry up and cease to flow. It is uncertain as regards the construction whether "the brook of God" is a second object of the verb, as rendered above, or whether it is the subject of a fresh clause, "The brook of God is full of water." The pronominal suffixes *THEIR* and *IT* are used somewhat freely, the first referring to *men* (as the dwellers in the earth), and the last to the *earth* itself. The repetition of the verb *prepare* seems de-

- 10 Thou waterest<sup>k</sup> the furrows thereof,  
 Thou settlest the ridges thereof;  
 With showers of rain thou makest it soft;  
 Thou blessest the increase of it.
- 11 Thou hast crowned the year with thy goodness,<sup>l</sup>  
 And thy tracks drop fatness;
- 12 The pastures of the wilderness drop (therewith),  
 And (with) exulting the hills gird themselves.
- 13 The meadows are clothed with flocks,  
 The valleys also are covered over with corn:  
 They shout together, yea they sing.

signed to mark that all is God's doing. He prepares the earth, and so prepares the corn.

So, i.e. by sending the rain. The present tenses are employed here to express that this God does not in one year only, but every year.

10. SETTLEST; lit. "pressest down," describing vividly the effect of a rich and abundant rain. The same word is used of *bending a bow* in xviii. 34 [35], where see note. The *ridges* are the lines of earth thrown up, by the action of the plough, between the *furrows*.

11. WITH THY GOODNESS. I have so rendered somewhat doubtfully, because no exactly parallel construction supports the translation (see Critical Note). The other rendering, "Thou hast crowned the year of thy goodness," gives no bad sense. The year of God's goodness would mean the year in which it had been emphatically displayed (comp.

Isa. lxi. 2); and this might be said to be crowned with the harvest.

THY TRACKS; properly *marks of the chariot-wheels*. Comp. xviii. 10 [11]; Deut. xxxiii. 26; Isa. lxvi. 15.

12. THE PASTURES OF THE WILDERNESS. Comp. Job xxxviii. 26, 27. But the wilderness does not mean a bare desert, as the word "pastures" shows; it is merely contrasted with the cultivated arable land.

13. THE MEADOWS. See on xxxvii. 20.

THEY SHOUT TOGETHER, striving, as it were, and vying with one another in their gladness; as the reflexive form of the verb denotes. Ewald and Delitzsch strangely introduce a new subject here — men, or all creatures, shout, etc. But nothing can be more beautiful, or more truly poetical, than the figure by which the valleys waving with corn are said themselves to shout and sing.

<sup>a</sup> הַיְמִיָּה has been variously interpreted. The LXX, σοὶ πρέπει ὕμνος; Jerome, *Tibi decet hymnus*, "Praise is comely for thee"; and so the older versions generally, as if they read הַיְמִיָּה (as the Rabb. commentators punctuate the same word in lxii. 2), part. of רִמָּה, "to be like, suitable." This has been adopted also by Hitzig and Ewald. But retaining the present punctuation, הַיְמִיָּה, "silence," "silent resignation," explanations differ. (1) Some, as Gei., De Wette, Gesen., suppose an asyndeton: "For thee there is silence, (and) praise," i.e. thou art worshipped both with the heart's stillness and with the words of men's

lips [or with *resignation* (in sorrow) and with thanksgiving (in joy)]. (2) Others, as Kimchi, Calvin, Cocc., etc. "Praise waiteth for thee." (3) Luther, Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, "Praise (is given) to thee (in) silence," i.e. in the deep stillness of the heart's devotion, as opposed to the loud, noisy service of heathen worshippers. Of these, either (2) or (3) seems preferable. *הוֹמִיָּה* is clearly a predicate; and the constr. in lxii. 2 is quite parallel, "My soul waiteth (is silent) for God," i.e. yields itself to him in quiet resignation.

<sup>b</sup> *הִרְבֵּה ע'*, perhaps not merely pleonastic, but, as Delitzsch suggests, enumerative, denoting the variety of circumstances, etc. (See xxxv. 20; cv. 27; cxlv. 5, and 1 Sam. x. 2; 2 Sam. xi. 18). Comp. the somewhat similar use of the Greek *χρῆμα, χρήματα*. It would be possible, however, to render: "iniquitous words."

<sup>c</sup> *אֲשֶׁרִי*, with relat. omitted, as lxxi. 18; lxxx. 6, etc. *יִשְׁכֵּן* in the next clause is a subordinate clause marking the *purpose*. (Ewald, § 337 b).

<sup>d</sup> *נִשְׂבָּעָה*, not fut., but either opt. or possibly conjunct., "that we may be satisfied," though this does not suit the connection so well.

<sup>e</sup> *קָרַשׁ* (instead of *קָרַשׁ*). See xlv. note <sup>d</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> *נִזְרָאוֹת*, not an adv., as cxxxix. 14, but a second accus. after the verb *תִּזְכְּרֵנִי*, which is here a pres., or rather an aorist, as denoting an action continued and repeated.

<sup>g</sup> *קָצוֹת* from *קָצָה*, properly stat. constr. for *קָצוֹת* from *קָצִיָּה*, fem. of *קָצָה*, or rather *קָצִי*. (Hupfeld).

<sup>h</sup> *מִזְרָאִי*, "the places whence the morning and evening go forth," i.e. the east and west. Strictly speaking, the expression can refer only to the *morning* (*יצא* being always used of the rising sun), but by zeugma, or attraction, the word is made here to refer also to the *evening*. Ewald gives somewhat similar expressions from the poets of Arabia and India. Zunz, in his translation, avoids the difficulty by rendering, "des Morgens Aufgang, und den Abend machst du jubeln." He thus makes *מִזְרָאִי* depend only on *בִּקְרִי*, and not on *שָׁרָב*.

<sup>i</sup> *תִּשְׁבָּעָה*, from *שָׁבַע* cognate with *שָׁקָה*, "Thou makest overflow, waterest," etc. in the same sense as the Hiph., Joel ii. 24; iv. 13. In *תִּזְכְּרֵנִי* we have a shortened form of the Hiph. (Gesen. § 53, 3, Rem. 4).

<sup>k</sup> *רָוָה* and *נָחַח* are, according to the existing punctuation, imperatives. But the sense thus obtained is awkward, and very few of the later commentators have defended it. Most regard them as infinitives absolute (*רָוָה* being for *רָוִה*; cf. Ex. xxii. 22; 1 Sam. iii. 12; Jer. xiv. 19, etc.), denoting *the manner in which* this preparation of the earth took place,

“watering the furrows,” etc. It is better perhaps to consider them as standing instead of the finite verb. (Gesen. § 131, 4 *b*). Hupfeld would, however, alter the punctuation, and read נִחַת רָחֵם, 3d pers. pret., in which case we should only have a not uncommon transition from the second person to the third.

<sup>1</sup> שָׁנַת טוֹבָהּ, lit. “the year *of* thy goodness,” and so the older interpreters understood it (in the same sense as “the year of grace,” Isa. lxi. 2), i.e. the year in which that goodness has been peculiarly manifested. The other rendering, “thou hast crowned the year *with* thy goodness,” is undoubtedly preferable, so far as the sense is concerned, but the construction, in point of grammar, is questionable. Hupfeld indeed refers to xlix. 6, and Böttcher to xc. 12, as instances of a similar attraction; but neither the one nor the other is really parallel.

## PSALM LXVI.

THE poet celebrates God's great deeds on behalf of his people, and calls upon all nations to join in thanksgiving to him. From the language of verses 8–12, the Psalm would seem to have been composed on the occasion of some special deliverance, but the expressions used are too general to lead to any certain conclusion as to the time when it was written. Some have supposed that the allusion is to the defeat of the Assyrians under Sennacherib (so Ven., Köst., Hengst., Delitzsch, Tholuck, the last even supposing it to have been written by king Hezekiah); others, to the return from the Babylonish captivity (the Rabb., Flam., De Wette, Ewald); others again, to the times of the Maccabees (Hitzig, Olsh.) But not a single critic of any name has ventured to place this Psalm earlier than the times of Hezekiah. Bishop Colenso, indeed, in order to support his theory as to the Elohistie Psalms, is obliged to suppose that it may have been written in the time of David. But, not to mention that the whole character and style of the Psalm are against such a supposition, it is obvious that the language of verses 8–12 is not applicable to the age of David. Here, as in Psalms xlv. and xlviii., we have Psalms, beyond all reasonable doubt, as late as the times of Hezekiah, in which God is addressed by the name Elohim, and not by the name Jehovah.

In verse 13, there is a sudden and remarkable change from the use of the plural to the use of the singular. Some would explain this on the principle that the people are personified, and therefore speak in



the singular. This, however, is very unnatural; no probable reason can be given for such a personification. It is far more likely that the sacred poet, after having spoken for the whole congregation, speaks for himself as one of that congregation, declaring with thanksgiving God's goodness to himself, felt and acknowledged by himself, as well as to all Israel. In fact, as the Psalm was clearly intended for the public worship of the Temple, the former part was probably designed to be sung by the whole choir of Levites and the latter by a single voice.

Ewald thinks that verses 13-20 formed originally a distinct poem; but the similar turn of expression in verse 5 and verse 16, and the abruptness of verse 13, considered as the beginning of a Psalm, are against this view, which otherwise is plausible.

The Psalm consists of five strophes, three of them being distinguished by the *Selah* at the close :

I. The exhortation addressed to the whole world to give glory to God (ver. 1-4).

II. The recounting of God's great acts on behalf of his people in times past (ver. 5-7).

III. The wonderful deliverance recently vouchsafed (ver. 8-12).

IV. The Psalmist himself promises to bring large offerings to God in grateful acknowledgment of his goodness (ver. 13-15).

V. He calls upon all to hear the story of God's mercy to himself, and especially of his answer to his prayer (ver. 16-20).

[For the Precentor. A Song. A Psalm.\*]

I. 1 SHOUT unto God, all the earth !

2 Sing the glory of his name,

Ascribe (to him) glory, (in) his praise.

3 Say unto God, "How terrible is thy work !"<sup>b</sup>

Because of the greatness of thy strength do thine  
enemies feign allegiance unto thee.

2. **ASCRIBE**, etc.; lit. "Make glory his praise," i.e. in giving him praise ascribe to him that glory which is his. The two nouns are in apposition with one another. Comp. Josh. vii. 19; Isa. xlii. 12.

3 **SAY UNTO GOD**. He now gives the reason why God should be praised, and he would have this acknowledgment

addressed directly to God, in order to stir and rouse the hearts of those who uttered it the more effectually; "for nothing so compels us to a due reverence towards God, as when we place ourselves before his face." — *Calvin*.

**HOW TERRIBLE**. Comp. the song of the heavenly harpers, Rev. xv. 3.

**FEIGN ALLEGIANCE**, i.e. do so in a

4 (In) all the earth they bow down unto thee and sing  
to thee ;

They sing thy name." [Selah.]

II. 5 Come and see the deeds of God :

Terrible (he is in) his doing concerning the children  
of men.

6 He turned the sea into dry land,

They passed through the river on foot : —

There let us rejoice<sup>e</sup> in him !

7 Ruling in his might forever,

His eyes keep watch upon the nations ;

As for the rebellious — let them not exalt themselves.

[Selah.]

III. 8 Bless our God, O ye peoples,

And make the voice of his praise to be heard.

forced and reluctant manner, though they would willingly withdraw their necks from the yoke if they could. Lit. "*lie* unto thee," whence the Prayer-book version "shall be found liars unto thee." The E. V. has here, and in xviii. 44 [45], where the same word occurs, "shall submit themselves," and in the margin in both places "yield feigned obedience," which is doubtless the true rendering. There is, perhaps, a tacit comparison implied. If even his enemies must render a forced and tardy and hypocritical submission, what should they do to whom he has manifested himself in love ?

4. BOW DOWN. It is unnecessary to render the verbs as futures of prediction. Faith boldly brings the future into the present, and sees that as already accomplished which is so in the purpose and will of God. Not Zion only, but the whole earth is the temple of God, wherein his praises are sung.

5. COME AND SEE. Comp. xlv. 8 [9]. The dull hearts of men must be roused, their attention excited ; the exhortation implying also that *fresh* acts of God's power and grace are to be beheld.

6. Faith makes the past as well as the future her own. The God who has now wrought wonders for his people is the same who once led them dryshod through the Red Sea and through the Jordan. Those miracles of the past recur in the present. That ancient story is not the record merely of a bygone age, but is daily new, daily repeats itself to those who have eyes open to see and hearts open to perceive. Hence the Psalmist says :

THERE LET US REJOICE IN HIM. *There*, pointing as it were to the field in which God had made bare his arm, and where the past history had been repeated in the present, *there* let us rejoice in him. (See more in Critical Note.)

7. KEEP WATCH, or "spy out." All the attempts of the nations against Israel are not unobserved of God ; hence the warning which follows.

THE REBELLIOUS, i.e. the heathen nations who threaten Israel, and so lift themselves up against God.

8. Again he calls upon all nations to bless God for his wonderful deliverance vouchsafed to his people. Then he describes their oppression.

9 Who putteth our soul in life,  
And hath not suffered our foot to be moved.

10 For thou didst prove us, O God,  
Thou didst fine us, as silver is fined.

11 Thou broughtest us into the net,  
Thou didst put a heavy burden on our loins.

12 Thou madest men to ride over our head ;

We came into fire and into water : —  
But thou broughtest us out to abundance.\*

IV. 13 I will come into thy house with burnt-offerings,  
I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips openly uttered,  
And my mouth spake when I was in distress.

15 Burnt-offerings of fatlings will I offer to thee  
With the incense of rams ;

I will offer bullocks with goats. [Selah.]

V. 16 Come, hear, and let me tell, all ye that fear God,  
What he hath done for my sonl.

#### 9. WHO PUTTETH OUR SOUL IN LIFE.

The expression denotes the being rescued from imminent peril, like the phrase "bringing up from the gates of death," etc.

10. The suffering of Israel is now described by a series of figures, the first of which marks *God's purpose* in the affliction.

THOU DIDST PROVE, etc. Comp. xii. 6 [7] ; xvii. 2 [3].

11. THE NET Probably here and in Ezek. xii. 13, this is the meaning of the word. It occurs, however, often in the sense of a *hold*, or *strong, fortified place*, as in 1 Sam. xxii. 4 ; xxiv. 23, etc. Hence many take it here to mean *prison*, *siege*, etc. So Aq., ἐν ὀχυρώματι, Symm., ἐν τοῖς πολιορκίαις. Jerome, in obsidionem. Similarly, Luther and Hupfeld. They had been like wild animals taken by the hunter in the toils, or like beasts of burden on whose loins a heavy load was laid (an image of servitude) ; they had been, as it were, cast down and trampled

upon by the horse-hoofs and chariot-wheels of their triumphant and savage enemies.

13. We have now the *personal* acknowledgment of God's mercy ; first, in the announcement on the part of the Psalmist of the offerings which he is about to bring, and which he had vowed in his trouble ; and then, in the record of God's dealing with his soul, which had called forth his thankfulness.

14. OPENLY UTTERED ; lit. "opened," used in like manner of vows (Judges xi. 35).

15. INCENSE, i.e. evidently the steam and smoke of the burnt sacrifices ascending in a cloud, the word being used, as Hupfeld observes, in its root-meaning. Comp. the Hiph. of the verb, *to make a smoke*, and hence *to burn*, etc. The enumeration of the various kinds of offerings may be (as Hengstenberg) an expression of his zeal and devotion, or as denoting that he considered no offerings too large or too costly.

- 17 I called unto him with my mouth,  
 And he was extolled<sup>f</sup> with my tongue.  
 18 If I had seen iniquity in my heart,  
 The Lord would not have heard me.  
 19 But surely God hath heard,  
 He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.  
 20 Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer,  
 Nor his loving-kindness from me.

17. HE WAS EXTOLLED; lit. "extolling was under my tongue." See Critical Note, and comp. x. 7.

18. IF I HAD SEEN, i.e. probably, if I had been conscious of iniquity in my heart, the assertion being that of freedom from anything like purposed deceit, as in xvii. 1; xxxii. 2; or the phrase may mean, as the E. V. takes it, "If I had regarded iniquity," i.e. looked upon it with pleasure and satisfaction. Comp. for this use of the verb (with the accusative) Job xxxi. 26; Hab. i. 13; Prov. xxiii. 31. For the general sentiment of the passage, comp. Job xxvii. 8, 9; Isa. i. 15; lix. 2, 3; John ix. 31; 1 John iii. 21. See South's Sermon on this verse, vol. iv. p. 118.

<sup>a</sup> שִׁיר מְזִמֹּר. The juxtaposition of the words is peculiar, without any name of the author following, as it does in the titles of xlvi., lxviii. In the title of lxvii. we have a similar instance, only the order is reversed, מ' ש', as also in lxviii. Hupfeld connects the two words together, taking the one as in constr. with the other; here, Song of a Psalm or Psalm-Song, and in lxvii. Psalm of a Song, or Song-Psalms. The difference between the two words will be found noticed in the General Introduction.

<sup>b</sup> מַעֲשֵׂיָהּ. This is commonly supposed to be a plural form, and therefore to be dependent (either as genitive or accusative) on נִירָא, "terrible in thy works," as in ver. 5, "terrible in his doing." But מ' may be singular. See on xlix., note <sup>b</sup>. (Ewald, *Lehrb.* § 256 *b*).

<sup>c</sup> נִשְׂמְחָה. Notwithstanding the optat. form of the word, almost all interpreters, ancient and modern, with one consent, render this as a past tense: "There *did* we rejoice," it being supposed that this sense is required by the connection. Hupfeld endeavors to defend it as a relative pret., like נִעְבְּרִי, which precedes. But נִעְבְּרִי is merely the simple fut., and this, of course, constantly stands after the pret. as a relative pret. (see for instance li. 7); but not a single instance can be alleged where the optat. form is thus used. Hupfeld refers, indeed, to the use of the simple fut. with אֶזְ in a past sense, and the paragog. fut. with עֵר, lxxiii. 17 (a passage, however, which may be otherwise interpreted) and with the Vau conv. — all constructions widely differing



from this. But if we choose to determine what a writer *must* say, instead of endeavoring to understand what he *does* say, we shall probably disregard grammar. What is he speaking of? He bids all men come and look upon God's mighty acts; those acts are typified by two; the passage of the Red Sea, and the passage of the Jordan. Then, turning to the congregation he says, *There* (looking on those wonderful works) let us rejoice in God, who is still the same God who delivered our fathers. Comp. the use of the particle שם in xxxvi. 12 [13], where see note. Delitzsch, I am glad to find, maintains the grammatical rendering, though he supposes the drying up of the sea and the rivers to be spoken figuratively of the deliverance which had just been vouchsafed, and which might be compared to those of old, and שם to point to the state of freedom into which they had been brought. He renders (1st ed.): "Allda wolln wir freun uns seiner." In his 2d ed. he has: "Allda freuten wir uns seiner."

<sup>d</sup> קרימו, Hiph. according to the K'thibh, and we must understand *the head* or *the horn* (see iii. 4), למי being used as a *dat. commodi* "for themselves, for their own advancement," etc.

<sup>e</sup> רִיחָה, lit. "overflow," "superfluity"; comp. xxiii. 5. It is unnecessary to correct רִיחָה, though Symm. has εὐρυχωρία, and this is supported by the Chald. Hupfeld thinks that the other ancient versions are in favor of the same reading. The LXX, ἀναψυχήν; another ἀνάψανσιν; Jerome, *refrigerium*; but they more probably connected the root with the idea of *moisture*, and so of refreshment.

<sup>f</sup> רוּחָם. Not a verb, as Symm. in the 3d pers. ὑψόθη, and the LXX and Jerome in the 1st pers., but a noun (of the same form as רוּחַ, etc.) prop. inf. Pal. for רוּחָם; the plur. occurs cxlix. 6. For the fem. form (common in Syr.) of the same inf., comp. Isa. xxxiii. 3.

## PSALM LXVII.

THIS Psalm, which, like the last, is anonymous, and which is evidently much later than the age of David, may have been composed either in the time of Hezekiah, when great hopes began to be entertained of God's purposes towards the nation, or at a time subsequent to the return from the Exile, when those hopes were so signally revived. The Psalm is not, properly speaking, a prophecy, if by that be understood a prediction; it is rather the fervent expression of a well-grounded hope. It is the joyful outpouring of a heart which longs to see the

God and King of Israel acknowledged and worshipped as the God and King of the world.

The Psalm, which was clearly designed for liturgical use, and may have been written, like the sixty-fifth, at the time of the gathering in of the harvest (see ver. 6), opens with words borrowed from the blessing of the high-priest in Num. vi. 24-26, a fact of which Bishop Colenso takes no notice in his remarks on the Psalm. The passage in Numbers, according to him, was probably written by a disciple of Samuel's, contemporary with David, who first introduced the name of Jehovah. On that hypothesis the Psalm is earlier than the passage in Numbers; indeed, Bishop Colenso thinks it "may have been written by David." The supposition is without foundation. If anything is plain, it is that the Psalmist *alludes* to the blessing of the high-priest, not that this is *an expansion* of the words of the Psalm. That a Psalm designed for the Temple service should be built upon the solemn priestly blessing so often heard in the Temple, a blessing thrice repeated (comp. ver. 1, 6, 7), is natural and easily explicable. That the Psalm should have suggested the formula of the blessing is extremely improbable. Besides, in three other Psalms we have allusions to the same formula, iv. 6 [7]; xxxi. 16 [17], and the thrice-repeated refrain in lxxx. Who can believe that the blessing was composed out of these passages? Psalm lxxx. was written long after David's time, and it is evident that all the expressions in the Psalms are borrowed from the one original in Numbers. The only conclusion is, that a later writer uses deliberately the name Elohim instead of the name Jehovah. The Psalm is marked by the refrain, verses 3 and 5, but has no strophical division properly so called.

[For the Precentor. On Stringed Instruments. A Psalm. A Song.]

1 God be gracious unto us, and bless us,  
(And) cause his face to shine among us. [Selah.]

2 That thy way may be known upon earth,  
Thy salvation among all the heathen.

1. Borrowed, as has already been observed, from the high-priest's blessing (Numb. vi. 24-26), but with some variations, and with the divine name Elohim instead of Jehovah.

AMONG US; lit. "*with us*," as accompanying and guiding us, instead of "upon us," as in Num. vi.

2. THAT THY WAY MAY BE KNOWN.

The infinitive is used impersonally. Lit. "to know," i.e. that men may know. God's goodness manifested in Israel would lead to a recognition of him among the heathen as the Lord of all. Comp. ix. 11 [12]. God's *way* is his purpose of grace, his salvation as vouchsafed

- 3 Let the peoples give thanks to thee, O God,  
     Let all (the) peoples give thanks unto thee !
- 4 Oh, let (the) nations rejoice and shout for joy,  
     For thou judgest (the) peoples (in) uprightness,  
     And thou ledest the nations upon earth. [Selah.]
- 5 Let (the) peoples give thanks to thee, O God,  
     Let all (the) peoples give thanks to thee !
- 6 (The) land hath given her increase :  
     May God, (even) our own God, bless us !
- 7 May God bless us,  
     And all the ends of the earth fear him !

first to Israel, and afterwards to the world.

THE HEATHEN. I have so rendered here the word elsewhere rendered *nations*, in order to represent the three *different* Hebrew words employed in this and the next two verses — *heathen, peoples, nations*.

3-5. The only real difficulty in interpreting this Psalm is in determining how the tenses are used. In verse 1 all are agreed that there is the expression of a wish, and that the verbs there are consequently optatives. But from verse 3 onwards, interpretations vary. Some render these verbs as optatives, others as presents, others again as futures. But in so short a Psalm, opening with a wish, and, as the majority of critics are agreed, concluding with a wish, it seems to me most probable that we have the expression of a wish throughout.

Ewald, Hupfeld, and Bunsen take the verbs here as *presents*: “Es danken dir,” etc. Calvin, Diodati, Hengstenberg, and Delitzsch as *futures*: “Loben werden,” etc. Tholuck and Zunz: “Loben (preisen) müssen.” Of the older versions, the LXX, Vulg., Jerome, have throughout these verses the optative (and Symm. in verse 4, where Aq. has the future); and so Stier, and the E.V.

LET ALL, etc.; lit. “Let the peoples, all of them,” and so again in verse 5.

4. FOR THOU JUDGE. Ewald and Tholuck, “*That* thou judgest”; and Zunz, “*When* thou judgest.”

THOU LEDEST. The verb is the same as in xxiii. 3, God being the great Shepherd of all nations. The object of the verb is repeated pleonastically by means of the pronoun; lit. “the nations upon earth thou ledest them.”

6. HATH GIVEN. The verb is in the past tense, and would seem to refer to a recent harvest, or to a year of plenty. Many, however (as the E.V.), understand this as the prophetic past, which is often used instead of a future. Others, again, as Ewald and Zunz, render it as a present. The expression occurs again in lxxxv. 12 [13], in Lev. xxvi. 4 (where the pret., it is true, has a future signification, but only because it stands with  $\dagger$  in the apodosis of the sentence), and Ezek. xxxiv. 27.

7. The Psalm closes with the same hope and longing for the blessing of God with which it opened. Delitzsch here again renders the verbs in the future (as in the E.V.), and Zunz in the present. But such renderings are against the general character of the Psalm.

## PSALM LXVIII.

THE subject of this grand hymn is the entry of God into his sanctuary on Zion. This is described under figures borrowed from the triumph of an earthly conqueror, who, after having vanquished his enemies, and taken possession of their country, marches in solemn procession at the head of his troops to occupy the city which he has selected as his capital and the seat of empire. God is represented, first as advancing at the head of the Israelites through the desert; then as leading them victoriously into Canaan; and finally as fixing his royal abode on Zion, whence he reigns in the majesty of universal dominion, acknowledged and feared by all the nations of the earth. Such is, briefly, an outline of the Psalm.

The methods of interpreting it, however, are various.

I. The Fathers, and most of the older theologians, hold the Psalm to be Messianic. Christ and the great facts of his history, especially his resurrection and ascension and dominion at the right hand of the Father, and the victory of the church over the world, are by them supposed to be here foreshadowed, in accordance with St. Paul's citation of the Psalm in Eph. iv. 8-11.

i. By many of them, indeed, the Psalm is regarded as a direct prophecy of Christ and his kingdom, and devoid altogether of any reference to events occurring at the time it was written. Thus they explain its several portions as describing the advent of Christ (ver. 1-6); his doctrine (ver. 7-16); his triumphant ascent into heaven (ver. 17, 18); and his dominion and kingdom (ver. 19-35).

ii. Others more reasonably maintain a first reference to the historical circumstances of the time, and then apply the Psalm, either in whole or in part, typically to Christ. Thus Calvin sees in verses 17, 18, a prefiguring, in the historical event of the ark entering into Zion, of Christ's ascension into heaven. More recently, Stier has interpreted the whole Psalm in this double sense, and has drawn out carefully the parallel throughout between the type and the antitype. Even Hupfeld, though he sets aside altogether the force of the quotation in Eph. iv. 8, etc., as being without sufficient ground in the meaning of the words as they stand in the Psalm, admits that in a certain sense the Messianic interpretation may be justified, inasmuch as the second part of the Psalm speaks of the subjection of all nations to the kingdom of God.

II. But even those who contend that the Psalm is to be explained,



in the first instance, by a reference to the circumstances under which it was composed, are very much divided in their opinions.

i. The majority of interpreters suppose it to have been written at the time when the ark was removed from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi.). This view, says Hupfeld, though not adopting it himself, "gives incontestably the best sense; in fact, it is the only one which suits not only the selection of Zion, in preference to Sinai and the heights of Basan, and the historical, retrospective glance at the earlier leading of God from Sinai onwards, as introductory to this triumphal entry, but also the lofty utterances and prospects connected with it."

ii. Others, again, from the martial character of the Psalm, conceive that it was written at the successful termination of some war, when the ark, which had accompanied the army to battle, was brought back to the holy mountain. "Why," says De Wette, "do we find so much about victory, the scattering of enemies, the leading away of captives, etc., unless some victory were the occasion on which the Psalm was written?" Similarly, Hengstenberg argues that the whole character of the Psalm is in favor of this view. "God is spoken of in it as the Lord of battle and of victory; the eighteenth verse announces the great fact which is celebrated; and the epithets applied to Benjamin and Judah, in verse 27, are given with reference to the military prowess of those tribes. Besides all this, the close imitation of the song of Deborah, in a main part of this poem, is, not without its significance." The glories of the present were to the Psalmist a repetition of the glories of the past. The shout of victory was ringing in his ears, and, almost in his own despite, the old battle-songs of his nation mingled themselves with the poet's verse.

iii. Still the question remains, *what* victory is here commemorated? Of those who refer the Psalm to David's time, some (as Cler. and Ros.) think that it was composed after David's victory over the Syrians and Edomites (2 Sam. viii.); others, after that over the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. xi., xii.). So Böttch., Tholuck, and Hengstenberg; the last arguing that, from verses 1 and 24 of the Psalm, the ark of the covenant must have been in the field, and that it may be inferred from 2 Sam. xi. 11 that this was the case in the war with the Ammonites. Others, again, as Calvin and Ladvocat, suppose that David's victories generally, rather than any particular one, are commemorated.

iv. Another class of commentators hold that later victories are here alluded to, because of the mention of the Temple (ver. 29); either that of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram over Moab and Edom, 2 Kings iii. (so

Hitzig); or that of Hezekiah over the Assyrians (so Kimchi); or finally, even those of the Maccabees, after the consecration of the Temple, 1 Macc. v.

v. Others find in the Psalm not so much the celebration of a particular historical event, as the expression of a general idea, clothed in a lyrical form. Thus, for instance, according to J. D. Michaelis, the holy places, the different sanctuaries of God, Sinai, Bashan, Zion (or heaven); according to Herder, the victories of God (comparing "thy goings," verse 25, with the same expression, Hab. iii. 6), with an application to the removal of the ark to Zion, which he considers to be the occasion of the Psalm, are the subjects here treated of. Similarly Reuss<sup>1</sup> terms it a festal hymn, in which are expressed the general feelings, recollections, hopes of the nation, in its oppressed condition under the Seleucidae and Ptolemies (220-170 B.C.).

vi. Gesenius, Ewald, and Hupfeld all refer the Psalm to the return from the Babylonish captivity. Ewald expressly connects it with the dedication of the second Temple, for which he thinks it was written, and when it was probably sung. Both he and Hupfeld consider that the second occupation of Canaan is described under figures borrowed from the first. But the latter sees in the language of the Psalm rather the promise, than the accomplishment, of the return from Babylon. The march of God with his people through the Arabian wilderness is, he says, made use of by the poet as a type and pledge of their speedy deliverance and restoration to their own land. He thus states his opinion: "We have in this Psalm the hope or promise of the return of the Jewish nation from the Babylonish captivity, and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon Zion in a state of great power, as it is announced in the pseudo-Isaiah, and in close connection with that announcement, perhaps by the very same author, in the form of a lyrical utterance, such as often occurs here and there in separate outbursts, and in the midst of the prophetic discourses of the pseudo-Isaiah, but is here moulded into a perfect hymn, the most glowing, the most spirited, and the most powerful which exists in the whole Psalter. It describes the restoration according to the well-known type, as a new victorious march of God through the desert to Canaan, and a second

<sup>1</sup> I only know his work by Hupfeld's description of it. The title is, "*Der 68 Psalm, ein Denkmal exegetischer Noth und Kunst zu Ehren unserer ganzen Zeit.*" Jena, 1851. It professes to have collected and exhibited the opinions of no less than four hundred interpreters, and, according to Hupfeld, "is written with much humor, full of points and antitheses in the grouping, and very amusing to read." But the very title shows the nature of the work; and it cannot be regarded as a serious contribution to the history of interpretation.

choosing and occupation of Zion as his royal residence, with all the features of a triumphal entry (*pompa*), and the consequent homage and submission which he receives."

Olshausen, as usual, puts the Psalm in the Maccabean period, and supposes it to have been written when the tidings came of the result of the war between Ptolemy Philometer and Alexander Balas, 1 Macc. xi.

It will be seen from this bare enumeration that there is the greatest difference of opinion both as to the occasion for which, and the period at which, the Psalm was written. Some (as Gesenius, Ewald, Hupfeld, Olsh., Reuss) regarding it as one of the later, or even of the very latest, of Hebrew poems; and others (as Böttch., De Wette, Hitzig) classing it with the very earliest. One set of critics sees in it every evidence of antiquity and originality; another sees in it every mark of a late age, and a great absence of originality. All, however, combine in praising its vigor, its life, its splendor; all recognize in it the work of a poet of no ordinary genius.

III. It remains for us to consider how far the allusions in the Psalm itself may help us to determine its age, and the occasion for which it was composed.

First, then, it is clear that the great central idea of the Psalm is the choice of Zion as the dwelling-place of Jehovah. To this all leads; from this all flows.

Secondly, this fact of itself would lead us to fix upon the age of David as the most probable time for the composition of the Psalm, and the removal of the ark to Zion as the most probable occasion. Nor is this set aside by the reference to the "Temple" in verse 28, inasmuch as the word here usually rendered *temple* is a word also applied to the tabernacle (see note on Psalm v. 7) at Shiloh.

Thirdly, the mention of the four tribes, Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, and Naphtali, as representatives of the southern and northern kingdoms respectively, seems more natural then than at any later period. There does not appear to be in verse 27 any prophetic anticipation of a restoration of the kingdom and the reunion of the tribes as of old, such as Hupfeld is obliged to assume. "After the captivity," says Hengstenberg, "there could be no such thing as the distinct tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, with their princes."

Fourthly, the peculiar manner in which the tribe of Benjamin is introduced, as "little Benjamin their ruler," does not seem suitable to post-exile times, but is very naturally to be explained at a time shortly subsequent to the death of Saul. The tribe which had been the royal tribe, and had so lately enjoyed the pre-eminence in Israel, might still be honored with the title of "ruler."

Fifthly, Egypt and Ethiopia are mentioned, evidently, as the great nations of the world, then occupying the most prominent position. It would seem, then, that the Psalm must have been written before the great Asiatic monarchies, the Assyrian especially, had become formidable. Hupfeld, indeed, argues that an anticipation of the conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia is not suitable to the age of David; but there is nothing in the language of the Psalm which implies such anticipation of conquest. All that is implied is, that the name of the God of Israel would be revered even by these nations, regarded as the representatives of the heathen world, and that they would bring their gifts, in homage, to Jerusalem. That which really weakens the argument drawn from the mention of these nations is, that they also occupy the same prominent position in the writings of the later Isaiah.

So far, then, as the historical allusions of the Psalm are concerned, the evidence is, on the whole, in favor of the age of David, rather than of a much later period.

But an argument for the later date has been built upon the language and general character of the Psalm. Both Ewald and Hupfeld insist upon the fact that so much of the Psalm is borrowed from passages in the older poetical literature of the nation, in proof that it is neither original nor ancient. They also lay particular stress upon the points of resemblance between its ideas and expressions and those of the later Isaiah. Thus they compare verse 4 [5], "Cast up a highway," etc., with Isa. xl. 3, lvii. 14, lxii. 10; the description of a procession, etc., with Isa. xl. 9, lii. 7; the restoration of the exiles, in the expression of *bringing home*, verse 6 [7], with Isa. lviii. 7; God's leading of his people, and his care of them, verses 7-10 [8-11], with Isa. xxxv., xli. 17, etc., xliii. 16, etc.; the shout of the festal procession, verse 3 [4], with Isa. xxxv. 10, li. 11, lii. 1, 8, etc.; the looking of the nations on God's doings, verse 24 [25], with Isa. xl. 5, xxxv. 2, lii. 10; the references to Egypt and Cush (Ethiopia), verse 29 [30], etc., with Isa. xliii. 3, xlv. 14, lx. 5, etc.

But, with the exception of the first two instances, the alleged similarities of expression are not very close, and are no proof of imitation in the Psalmist. The more manifest quotations from Num. x., and from the song of Deborah, are, of course, reconcilable with the hypothesis of an earlier date. On the other hand, the general ruggedness and abruptness of the style are hardly compatible with the post-exile theory. DeWette's canon applies here: "The more difficult, the more rugged in the style, the more nervous, vigorous, and compressed in the thoughts, the older a Psalm is; on the contrary, the easier and the



more flowing in the style, the more transparent, regular, and smooth in the contents, the later it is" (Introd. to Comm. IV.). See also Renan, *Job*, p. xxxvii. If this be true, there can be little doubt of the antiquity of the Psalm.<sup>1</sup> Even Ewald admits that there have been incorporated in it, to all appearance, important fragments of an earlier poem now lost, which was probably intended to celebrate the removal of the ark to Zion.

The general structure of the Psalm, notwithstanding all the difficulties which beset many portions of it, is clear and well defined. It consists

<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that so far I agree with Bishop Colenso as to the probable date of the Psalm. But his theory as to its *composition* appears to me extravagant and utterly untenable. He supposes that Samuel invented the story of the Exodus, that he communicated this invented story to the Priests and Levites, and that in the course of thirty or forty years they had so persuaded the nation of its truth, that it could be introduced into a hymn to be sung at a great religious festival. He further argues that the passage in Num. x. must have been borrowed from the Psalm, not the Psalm from the history; but the reasons he alleges are devoid of all cogency. He says:

"Surely if the *Psalmist* drew his language from so sacred a book as the Pentateuch, according to the ordinary view, must have been, he would not have changed the name from Jehovah to Elohim."

*Ans.* Here obviously the question, what the Pentateuch is, according to the ordinary view, has nothing to do with the matter. The question is, on what principle these changes in the use of the divine names rest, and why one is preferred to the other. We have already seen that in two recensions of the same Psalm (xiv., liii.) there is every reason to suppose that the one which contains the name *Jehovah*, is the earlier. Indeed, in the later books of the Bible there is a general disposition to use Elohim in preference to Jehovah.

Again: "The name Jehovah, if it had really originated in the way described in the Pentateuch, would have been the very name required for this Psalm, considering its character, as the name of the covenant God of Israel."

*Ans.* We are quite in the dark on this subject. Besides, the object might have been in such a Psalm as this, to represent God not only in his relation to Israel ("his name is Jah"), but as the God of all the earth, and hence most fittingly the nations are called upon to "sing praises to Elohim."

As to the *older* grammatical forms which the Bishop asserts occur in the Psalm, as compared with the forms of the same words in the passage in Numbers, there is no proof that they are older, but quite the reverse. Thus, for instance, in Gen. iii. 24 we have *הַכְּרִיבִים*, and in 1 Kings vi. 23 *כְּרִיבִים*, this last being, according to the Bishop's theory, the older word. Nay, we have in the same narrative in Gen. xxiv. the two forms of the same word, *אֵילַן* in verse 5, and *אֵלֶךְ* verse 39.

Again, in Gen. xiv. 10, one of the very oldest portions of the Hebrew Scriptures, we have *וַיִּקְסֵי*, which is the usual mode of writing, till we come to the *later* books; see 2 Kings vii. 7 (where, however, we have *both* forms), and 1 Chron. xix. 14, 15.

As regards the form *אֵלֶיךָ*, we have in this very Psalm the other (alleged later) form *בְּאֵיכָבִים*, verse 24.

of the following divisions (which rest on the common principle of pairs of verses) :

I. An introduction which, with true lyric animation, sets before us the victorious march of God, the deliverances he has accomplished for his people, and the loud exultation to which they are called in consequence (ver. 1-6).

II. Then follows a glance at the former history — the journey of Israel through the wilderness, under the immediate guidance and care of God (ver. 7-10).

III. The triumphant occupation of the land of Canaan, and the flight of the hostile kings (ver. 11-14).

IV. The choice of Zion as the abode of God, and his solemn entry into it (ver. 15-18).

V. The Psalmist, contemplating the glorious results of this abode of God in Zion, calls upon all Israel to praise him, chiefly because he will punish all the enemies of his people (ver. 19-23).

VI. The next strophe reverts to a description of the triumphal procession (ver. 24-27).

VII. The hope is expressed that all the nations of the world shall acknowledge and submit themselves to Jehovah who dwelleth in Zion (ver. 28-31).

VIII. The Psalm closes with a summons to all the kingdoms of the earth to praise God (ver. 32-35).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David. A Song.]

I. 1 LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered,  
And let them that hate him flee before his face.

1. As the last Psalm opened with a reference to the high-priest's blessing (Num. vi. 24), so this opens with a reference to the watchword (Num. x. 35), with which the ark was wont to set forward during the journeys in the wilderness. "Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thy face." There are two variations here from the original formula: first, the use of the third person optative (for the future should not be rendered, with Hengstenberg, and others, as a present), instead of the imperative; and secondly, the substitution of Elohim for Jehovah, as the name of God, which is characteristic

of the Psalm, and accounts for its place in the second book. With regard to the former, Böttcher truly remarks, that the formula with the imperative, "Arise," etc., is certainly historically older than our Psalm [and not, as Bishop Colenso and others would maintain, the Psalm more ancient than the passage in Numbers], and that it must have originated with the more ancient custom; comp. Num. xxxi. 6; Josh. vi. 4; 1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. xi. 11. "I cannot doubt," says Calvin, "that Moses dictated this form of prayer for all ages, in order that the faithful, relying on the ark of the covenant as the visible symbol of God's presence, might rest sure that they would be safe."

- 2 As smoke is driven away, do thou drive (them) away ;<sup>a</sup>  
 As wax melteth before the fire,  
 (So) let the wicked perish from before the face of God.
- 3 But let the righteous rejoice, let them exult before God,  
 And let them be glad with joy.
- 4 Sing unto God, play (on the harp) to his name,  
 Cast up a highway for him who rideth through the  
 deserts :<sup>b</sup>  
 Jah is his name,<sup>c</sup> and exult before him.
- 5 A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows,  
 (Is) God in his holy habitation.

2. The figures here employed occur elsewhere ; comp. xxxvii. 20 ; xcvii. 5 ; Hos. xiii. 3 ; and Mic. i. 4. They describe forcibly the real weakness, the easy and instantaneous overthrow, of the strongest earthly power when arrayed against God. Hupfeld, and Herder before him, as it seems to me without reason, suppose them to have been "borrowed from the pillar of smoke and fire above the ark."

In the last member of this verse, and the first of the next, Hengstenberg sees a reference to the conclusion of the song of Deborah : "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

3. **THE RIGHTEOUS.** Here, Israel as a nation regarded in its ideal character, and as placed in contrast with its heathen oppressors, "the wicked." Comp. Hab. ii. 4.

4. The first part of the introduction ends with the last verse, and perhaps a second chorus here takes up the strain.

**CAST UP A HIGHWAY ;** the figure being borrowed from the custom of eastern monarchs, who sent heralds and pioneers before them to make all the necessary preparations — to remove obstructions, etc. along the route which they intended to follow. Great military roads were mostly the work of the Romans, and were almost unknown before the Persian and Grecian periods. Comp. Isa. xl. 3 ;

lvii. 14 ; lxii. 10, where the same verb, or the noun formed from it, occurs.

**WHO RIDETH,** said perhaps with allusion to the cherubim on which Jehovah was borne (xviii. 10 [11]), God himself being the leader and captain of his people, riding as it were at their head, as an earthly captain might lead his army, riding on a war-horse.

**THE DESERTS,** or "sandy steppes" (as in Isa. xl. 3), such as those on both sides of the Jordan over against Jericho, and the Arabian deserts to the south and east. The allusion is, in the first instance, to the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness, or Arabah, though, supposing the Psalm to be post-exile, there would be a further reference to the deserts lying between Babylon and Palestine. The word cannot mean *heavens*, as the Targ. and Talmud (led astray, probably, by the similar figure in Deut. xxxiii. 26) ; nor *the West*, as the LXX and the Vulg. render it. The former is found in our Prayer-book version, "magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon a horse," which is the more remarkable, as that version usually follows the Vulg. and the German. Here it departs from both. The words "as it were upon a horse," were added, I presume, as a further explanation of the verb "rideth." I can discover nothing answering to them in any of the ancient versions.

5. The character and attributes of God,

6 God maketh the solitary to dwell in a home ;

He bringeth forth (the) prisoners into prosperity :<sup>d</sup>

Only (the) rebellious abide in a land of drought.

II. 7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,

When thou marchedst through the wilderness, [Selah]

and his gracious dealings with his people, are now alleged as the reason why he should be praised. The "fatherless" and the "widows" are mentioned as examples of those who most need succor and protection. As Arndt says: "The meaning of the Holy Ghost is, that God the Lord is a gracious, friendly God and King, whose first, highest, and principal work it is to give most attention to the *miserabiles personae*, that is, to those persons who ought to be most pitied, because they are helpless and comfortless. Great potentates in the world do not act thus; they respect the noblest and richest in the land, the men who may adorn their court, and strengthen their power and authority. But the highest glory of God is to compassionate the miserable." God is both the loving *Father* and the righteous *Judge*; and the several classes of the lonely, the destitute, the oppressed, the captives, are mentioned as so many instances of those who have experienced both his care and his righteousness, in order that from these the conclusion may be drawn in all similar cases. Hengstenberg compares Hos. xiv. 4, "With thee the fatherless findeth mercy"; and therefore all who need mercy.

IN HIS HOLY HABITATION, i.e. heaven, not the earthly sanctuary (comp. xi. 4), "in opposition to the earth, as the seat of unrighteousness and coldness of heart." (Hengstenberg.)

6. THE SOLITARY . . . THE PRISONERS. Those who hold that the Psalm was written subsequently to the Babylonish Captivity, see in these words an allusion to the actual circumstances of Israel during the Exile. But it is more natural to suppose that these are mentioned as other particular examples, like the orphan and the widow, of God's fatherly care.

ONLY, here almost = *but*. It may be

explained, "it is not otherwise than thus." Comp. lviii. 11 [12]. THE REBELLIOUS; all enemies of God, whether heathen, or those who in Israel itself were disobedient. Δρ., ἀπιστάμενοι; Symm., ἀπειθεῖς.

7. The proper theme of the Psalm now opens with allusions to the great triumphal march of God at the head of his people through the wilderness, and in their occupation of the land of Canaan. The words of this and the next verse are borrowed, with some variations, from the song of Deborah (Judges v. 4, 5), and this again rests on passages such as Deut. xxxiii. 2 and Ex. xix. 16, etc. Comp. Hab. iii. The reference is first to the terrors of the Theophany on Sinai, and the glorious majesty of God as there seen.

WENTEST FORTH . . . MARCHEDST, words used especially of going forth to battle; God being regarded as the captain of his people. Comp. xlv. 9 [10]; lxxxi. 5 [6]; Num. xxvii. 17, 21; Hab. iii. 13; Zech. xiv. 3.

THE WILDERNESS (or "waste," *y'shi-mon*, not *midbar*, which last may mean only uncultivated land, pasture-ground), often applied to the Arabian desert, as lxxviii. 40; cvi. 14. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 10; Isa. xliii. 19, 20. Throughout their whole march God's presence and glory were manifested, but never so awfully as when he came down on Sinai, to give his law to his people. Then all nature was moved at his coming; then "so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. xii. 21). Hence it is that the great prominence is given to *this* manifestation of God. And hence he is here called "the God of Israel," because from Sinai dates God's covenant relation to Israel, as Delitzsch observes.

8. YON SINAI (the demonstrative pro-



8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped before God,  
Yon Sinai before God, the God of Israel.

9 (With) a bountiful rain thou didst sprinkle thine inheritance,\* O God,

And when it was weary, THOU didst refresh it;

10 Thy creatures dwelt therein;

Thou preparest in thy goodness for the afflicted, O God.

noun prefixed, as in xlvi. 14 [15]). Some verb must be supplied, "shook," "was moved," from the first member of the verse. The original passage, Judges v. 5, contains the full expression.

9. A BOUNTIFUL RAIN; lit. either "a rain of free-willingness," which has hence been interpreted to mean, rain as a gift of free grace (so Calvin), or "a rain of liberality," i.e. as a liberal, bountiful gift (see note on liv. 6 [8]). The early interpreters understand this rain spiritually of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Others, again, figuratively of the various gifts and benefits with which God visited his people in the wilderness. Those who take the word in its more literal sense, are divided in their interpretation; some, as J. D. Michaelis and Herder, supposing a literal rain to be meant (the former, a rain which fell at the giving of the law), and which changed the barrenness of the desert into verdure and fruitfulness; others, that the reference is to the manna, which is said in lxxviii. 24 to have been *rained* from heaven. To me it seems certain that the expression is used figuratively of refreshment and blessing; this appears, indeed, to be required by the following clause: "And when it was weary," etc.

THOU DIDST SPRINKLE. The verb is the aorist of repeated past action, and is construed with the double accusative. See Critical Note.

REFRESH; lit. "confirm, strengthen."

10. THY CREATURES. I have left the word in the ambiguity of the original. Three different interpretations have been given of it: (1) If the *rain* spoken of in verse 9 be (as Hupfeld and others suppose) *the manna*, then *the creatures* here

spoken of may be *the quails*; "Thy living creatures settled therein" (i.e. in thine inheritance, among thy people (comp. lxxviii. 28), "in the midst of the camp"); with which the rest of the verse corresponds, "Thou preparedst (them, as food, see the same verb, lxxv. 9 [10]; lxxviii. 20) for the afflicted" (i.e. Thy people in their distress). (2) Others take the word here in the meaning "host" (as in 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, 13, where it is used of *an army*), i.e. the congregation, or people of Israel. (3) But it may also mean Israel in another sense, viz. as compared to a *flock*, a favorite image in the Psalms. So Delitzsch (who refers to lxxiv. 19), "Thy afflicted creatures," which, however, might be rendered in accordance with (2), "the congregation of thy afflicted ones." The difficulty in the last two interpretations lies, no doubt, in the feminine pronoun, *הָאֵלֶּה*, *in it*, or *therein*. There is no noun to which it can immediately refer. Hence it has been supposed either (a) to denote *the land of Canaan*, as the well-known beloved land which needed no special designation (as Delitzsch); comp. the use of the feminine pronoun in verse 14 [15], and see note there; but according to this, the settlement in the land is mentioned before the description of its occupation, which follows, verse 11, etc. Or, (b) the wilderness mentioned verse 7, which is then said in the next clause to have been *prepared* by fertilizing rains, etc.

THOU PREPAREST. The word may be used here absolutely, = "Thou preparest a table," as in 1 Chron. xii. 39, and it need not be rendered as a past, as referring to the provision in the

## III. 11 The Lord giveth (the) word :

The women who publish the tidings are a great host.

12 "Kings of hosts do flee, do flee,"<sup>f</sup>

And she that tarrieth at home divideth the spoil.

13 Will<sup>s</sup> ye lie among the sheepfolds,

(As) the wings of a dove that is covered with silver,

And her feathers with yellow gold?—

wilderness; rather, that is one of *many repeated instances* of God's care; and we have consequently the statement of a general truth.

11. The sacred poet now passes to the actual occupation of the Holy Land.

THE LORD (ADONAI) GIVETH (THE) WORD. The noun "word" (which is found only in poetry) is used in lxxvii. 8 [9], of the "word of promise"; in Hab. iii. 9, apparently of the "word of power," or "word of victory." Perhaps both meanings may be combined here. It is in virtue of God's word of promise that Israel takes possession of Canaan; it is by his word of power that the enemies of Israel are discomfited. "God speaks—and the victory is won." Others (as Ewald, Fürst, etc.) render "song of victory," God himself putting this into the mouths of the women, who came forth with timbrels and dances to meet the victorious army on its return.

THE WOMEN. The participle is in the feminine, and the allusion is to the custom above mentioned. The deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh's host, the overthrow of Sisera, and David's victory over Goliath, were all thus celebrated. Cf. Ex. xv. 20; Judges v. 1, 12; 1 Sam. xviii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 20.

12. This and the next two verses wear the air of being a fragment of one of those ancient battle-songs, sung by the women after the defeat of the foe. The fact that they have thus been torn from their original context accounts for the great obscurity which hangs over them. It is, indeed, almost hopeless now to understand the allusions.

KINGS OF HOSTS, not those defeated

by Moses, as the kings of the Amorites (Rosenmüller and others), but, as the reference to the song of Deborah clearly shows, the Canaanitish kings (Judges v. 19, and vii. 26), where observe also the repetition of the verb. Bunsen, however, suggests that there may rather be an allusion to Josh. x.

SHE THAT TARRIETH AT HOME; the mistress of the household, so called as keeping house, whilst her husband goes forth to battle: an expression peculiarly in conformity with Eastern customs. Similar is the phrase "women in the tent" (Judges v. 24). DeWette compares *οικουρός*, Eurip. *Hec.* 1261.

DIVIDETH THE SPOIL, not merely (as Hupfeld) "receives her portion of the spoil," but rather "distributes among her daughters and handmaidens, etc. the share of the spoil" which her husband has brought home. Hence the mother of Sisera is represented as anticipating the share of the spoil which would fall to her lot (Judges v. 30), "one colored garment, two pieces of embroidery as spoil for my neck" (so, with a very slight correction, the passage should probably be rendered).

13, 14. Scarcely two commentators will be found to agree as to the interpretation of these verses. The only point on which there can be said to be anything like a consensus, is in the explanation of the figure in verse 13. Nearly all see, in the dove and the glittering of her wings in the sunshine, an emblem of prosperity and peace, though some suppose that the allusion is to the bright armor of the warriors, glittering in the sunshine. Cf. the same figure in Soph. *Antig.* 114, λευκῆς χιόνης πτέρυγας

14 When the Almighty scatters kings therein,  
(It is as when) there is snow in Zalmon."

στεγανός. So Mr. Plumptre, in a spirited translation of this Psalm :

"The hosts their might display,

Like silver dove with wings of golden glow."

I will mention some of the interpretations of the more celebrated critics. J. D. Michaelis renders : "Lie not among the drinking-troughs, (among) the doves' wings covered with silver," etc. He supposes the words to be addressed to the two tribes and a half, whose territory lay on the other side of the Jordan, and who were rich in flocks and herds. They are exhorted not to indulge their natural inclination for the shepherd's life, but to join their brethren in the invasion of Canaan. DeWette : "When ye lie among the stalls of the cattle (i.e. in the indolent repose of a country life), there are doves' wings covered with silver," etc. (a figurative expression denoting the rich ornaments of silver and gold taken from the spoil, with which the women decorated themselves). Similarly, Rosenmüller, only that he supplies before the second clause, "*Then shall ye be as the wings of a dove,*" etc. Ewald, who says there is evidently an opposition between verses 13 and 14, explains the whole passage as follows : "When ye (Israelitish men, for it is the women who sing) rest between the sheep-folds, i.e. lazily stretched at length on pleasant, grassy spots by the water-side (Judges v. 16; Gen. xlix. 14), consequently when ye have peace, as now after the conclusion of the war, *so are the wings of the doves covered with silver,* etc. (in allusion to the glittering of the plumage in the sunshine); *but when God scatters kings, in the hard battle, then the snow falls in it (the same land) darkly;* i.e. then sends the same God dark snow (and hail) for the destruction of the enemies who assail his sanctuary (Job xxxviii. 22, etc.), as has been shown just before." Thus, Ewald finds a contrast between peace and sunshine on the one hand, and war and stormy weather on the other. But it is fatal to this view

that hail is not mentioned at all, and that snow is not used elsewhere as an image of darkness or destruction. Herder (*Geist der Heb. Poes.* ii. 69, 70) thinks that all is said by way of taunt, borrowed from the song of Deborah. Deborah reproached the unwarlike tribes, to whom the bleating of the flocks was sweeter than the clashing of arms and the din of battle; here they are taunted, because, in their cowardice, they kept aloof from the war, tending their cattle, and admiring the bright plumage of their doves, whilst a woman, the inhabitant of a house, Deborah, divided the spoil. Hence he renders, "Why rest ye there among the troughs?" (an ironical question) "The feathers of the doves are, no doubt, bright as silver, and her wings sparkle like yellow gold"! (said sarcastically of the occupations and conversation of men who thought more of their doves than of the freedom of their country.) In the same way he supposes their effeminacy to be lashed in what follows : "When the Almighty scattered kings, snow fell upon Zalmon"; i.e. it was in rough, and stormy, and wintry weather, that Deborah went forth to her battle and her victory, but the recreant tribes, seeing snow lying even upon the comparatively low hill of Zalmon, in the south, argued how far worse it must be in the north, and thus refused to join the army. This view has been adopted by Hupfeld. But Bunsen justly remarks, that it would be very extraordinary if the only portion of the song of the women here quoted should be that which was aimed in biting taunt against their own countrymen, not that which described most vividly the glorious victory which had been won. According to Hengstenberg, the Israelites, to whom the address is directed, are described figuratively as the wings of the doves, etc., or they are *like* doves whose wings glitter with silver and gold. The allusion is to the play of colors on the wings of the dove in sunshine. This denotes the peaceful, and, at the same time, *splendid* condition



## IV. 15 A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan,

A mountain of (many) peaks<sup>h</sup> is the mountain of  
Bashan.

enjoyed by Israel, in the lap of prosperity. The same idea is carried out in the second figure, that of the *snow*, an image of the bright gleam of heaven which fell on the darkened land on the prosperous termination of the war; — when the Lord scatters kings, the light of prosperity illuminates the darkness of the land, just as dark Zalmon becomes white when covered with snow. He observes that snow is generally used as an image of brightness and purity. Comp. li. 7 [9]; Isa. i. 18; Mark ix. 3 (with Matt. xvii. 2); Rev. i. 14. Zalmon is a hill mentioned in Judges ix. 48, situated in the neighborhood of Shechem, and covered with a thick wood, so that, as Luther says, “it might be called in German a *Schwartzwald*, or dark forest, the dark or black mountain.” This, on the whole, is preferable to any of the other interpretations. It has the merit of simplicity, and it yields a fairly satisfactory sense. I would venture, however, to suggest another explanation of verse 14. It seems to me, as Ewald has remarked, that this verse is rather in opposition to the preceding, than a continuation of the same idea. The first describes the sunshine of peace; the second the storm of war. May not then the comparison of the snow refer to the *scattering* of the kings? May not those kings and their armies, broken and scattered far and wide over the land, be aptly compared to the white patches of snow, lying in broken masses over the dark boughs of the forest? “When the Almighty scattered kings in the land, it was like a fall of snow on (darkly-wooded) Zalmon.” The comparison becomes still more strikingly apt, when we remember how the arms and armor and rich spoil, dashed here and there in the wild disorder of the flight, would *glitter* like snow in the sunshine. [Since writing the above, I have discovered that Delitzsch also associates the image of the snow with the dispersed army, but finds the point of the comparison, not in the dispersion,

but only in the *bright shining* of the scattered armor and spoils. He refers, as Böttcher had already done before him, to Homer’s comparison of the gathering of the Achaeans from their ships, with lance and hemlet and plume glittering in the sunlight (*λαμπρόν γανώσσαι*), to the thickly-falling snow-shower (*ταρφέαι νιφάδες*) — *Iliad*, xix. 357, etc.; comp. xii. 258, etc. Böttcher says that he once heard the remark made in a town near Leipzig, of a large body of students who were approaching, “They come like snow from the mountain” (Sie kommen wie geschneit vom Berge), and that this first threw light for him on this passage in the Psalm]. The interpretation of Gesenius and others, “the land was snow-white with the bones of the slain in (or near) Zalmon,” is forced and unnatural. It drags in an idea which is not suggested by the figure of the *snow*, but only by the general one of *whiteness*; and, further, the mention of the bones bleached and whitening the battle-field, could only be possible at a time long subsequent to the victory.

14. THEREIN, i.e. in the land, implied, though not expressed, in what goes before; comp. the same mode of expression in Isa. viii. 21; or, perhaps, in Zalmon; for the pronoun is thus frequently anticipative of the noun: “It was like snow in Zalmon, when the Almighty scattered kings there.”

ZALMON, or “the dark mountain,” probably, as already remarked, the hill mentioned in Judges ix. 48, the only other passage where the word occurs. Böttcher supposes that some other loftier mountain belonging to the Basanitic range is meant. Others, that the noun is here not a proper name, but signifies “darkness, gloom,” etc. I have retained here the orthography adopted by our translators in Judges ix., the Z representing the same Hebrew letter as in Zion, Zoar, etc.

15. The end of all this manifestation of God’s power on behalf of his chosen,



- 16 Why look ye enviously,<sup>1</sup> ye many-peaked mountains,  
 Upon the mountain which God hath desired to dwell in?  
 Yea, Jehovah will abide (therein) forever.
- 17 The chariots of God are twice ten thousand,<sup>k</sup> are thousands  
 upon thousands,  
 The Lord among them (hath come from)<sup>1</sup> Sinai into his  
 sanctuary.
- 18 Thou hast ascended up on high,

of all these splendid victories, is the occupation of the Holy Land. He has given it to his people, that he may abide and reign in the midst of them. He has chosen, not the lofty range of Bashan, but the more lowly Zion for his seat: and to this new sanctuary he comes from Sinai, attended by "an innumerable company of angels."

A MOUNTAIN OF GOD (not merely "a high mountain," see on xxxvi. 6 [7]). The huge range of Bashan, with its rocky pillars and sharp pinnacles (its "many peaks"), is so termed, as if bearing witness in a special manner, by its strong massive formation, to the power of him who created it. (The basalt, or *basanites* of the ancients, has been supposed to take its name from Bashan, where it is found.) This stood in the most striking contrast to the limestone formation and unimposing character of the hills of Central Palestine. These bold mountain masses, rising in dark majesty, and producing the impression of everlasting strength, stand on one side, while on the other is placed the small and apparently insignificant Zion, having no greatness or strength in itself, but great and strong nevertheless in the immediate and glorious presence of God; and hence the former seem to look with envy upon the latter, at seeing it thus elevated to a height to which it had no natural claim. Comp. xlviii. 2 [3]; Isa. ii. 2. Others, again, suppose that Bashan is styled a "mountain of God" as an ancient seat of religious worship. So Hupfeld, who quotes J. D. Michaelis, "Neque illi Libani Basanisque fastigio suae defuerunt religiones."

17. In solemn triumph, at the head of armies of angels, and like a victor who leads trains of captives and spoils in long array, God enters his sanctuary in Zion.

CHARIOTS (the singular used collectively), i.e. war-chariots (comp. xx. 7 [8]); carrying out the image, as in Hab. iii. 8, 15. The angelic hosts are evidently meant. Comp. 2 Kings vi. 17.

TWICE TEN THOUSAND; lit. "two myriads." Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 2 (where the angels are spoken of as "holy myriads"); Dan. vii. 10. These angels may be meant also in Num. x. 36 (the passage borrowed in verse 1, and perhaps alluded to here), "Return, O Jehovah, with the myriads of the thousands of Israel."

THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS; lit. "thousands of repetition."

(HATH COME FROM) SINAI. For a defence of this rendering, see Critical Note. The rendering of the E.V. "As in Sinai, in the holy place," is grammatically wrong; and still worse is the Prayer-book version, "as in the holy place of Sinai."

18. THOU HAST ASCENDED. Comp. xlvii. 5 [6]. Whither? Not, I think, as many interpreters explain, into heaven; for though that is the meaning of the passage in its New Testament application (see below), it is not, apparently, the primary meaning. Here, as we have seen, the triumphant procession winds its way up the sacred hill of Zion. The ascent, therefore, can be none other than the ascent of the ark into the tabernacle, or temple there.

ON HIGH. See for this, as applied to Zion, Jer. xxxi. 12; Ezek. xvii. 23; xx.

Thou hast led captives captive,

Thou hast taken gifts amongst men : <sup>m</sup>

Yea, even the rebellious (shall be) for Jah God to abide <sup>n</sup>  
(among).

40. Hofmann (*Schriftb.* II. i. 484) denies that either *heaven* or *Zion* is intended by this expression, but that general exaltation of God which is spoken of in the similar passages, xlvii. 5 [6]; xxi. 13[14]. The closest resemblance is found, he remarks, in vii. 7 [8]. And God is said to ascend in triumph over his vanquished foes. Similarly Calvin, although admitting the typical sense.

CAPTIVES; lit. *a captivity*, i.e. a number of captives; the image being still carefully preserved of the victor, with his long train of captives following him in the triumph. The rendering of the E. V., "Thou hast led captivity captive," is ambiguous, as it might mean, "Thou hast led captive those who have led others captive," which, however, is not the meaning of the Hebrew phrase (cf. Judges v. 12).

GIFTS, i.e. tribute from the vanquished; or rather, perhaps, from all those who submit themselves to his sway.

AMONGST MEN. This is the literal rendering (not "*for* men," i.e. to let them go free, nor *of* men, they themselves being the gifts, for the history of David knows nothing of "prisoners who were sent as gifts to the sanctuary," nor of "proselytes, who, as it were, gave themselves as gifts to God," as Hengstenberg remarks), and, in the context in which it stands, is, of course, very nearly the same as "*from* men."

THE REBELLIOUS. This completes the picture of the triumph. *All* — even those nations which hold out the longest in their stubborn resistance, and refuse to submit themselves to the Great Victor — must finally acknowledge his sway. All shall be united in one kingdom, and God the Lord shall reign in the midst of them. This is the great prophetic idea which recurs so often in the writings of Psalmists and prophets. God is the King of all the earth; and, in spite of all opposition, his kingdom shall be set

up, and on the throne of that kingdom, his Son, his Anointed (the Messiah, the Christ), shall reign. Hence it is that St. Paul (Eph. iv. 9) applies this verse to the resurrection and triumphant ascension of Christ. It is true that in so doing he has departed from the Hebrew and from the LXX. The latter have: ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἡχημαλώτευσας αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔλαβες δόματα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶ γὰρ ἀπειθοῦντες τοῦ κατασκηνώσαι. The first clause of this — the only part of it which is intelligible — the apostle retains, except that he substitutes the third person ἡχημαλώτευσεν, for the second; but for the second clause he has: καὶ ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, "and gave gifts unto men." Hence he is giving, not a translation, but an interpretation of the Hebrew. For the verb לקח, "to take," never means "to give," and the meaning for which Eadie contends (and which Alford thinks substantiated), "Thou receivedst in order to give," cannot be maintained here. The examples, Gen. xv. 9; xviii. 5; xxvii. 13; xlii. 16; Ex. xxvii. 20; 1 Kings xvii. 10, are not in point. In all those instances the verb may be rendered (as it commonly is in the E. V.) "fetch." But it would be impossible to say, "Thou hast fetched gifts among men." It must at least be "*for* men" (לְאֶחָד), and then, "Thou hast given gifts *to* men" would be an equivalent expression to "Thou hast taken gifts *for* men." We cannot, therefore, argue from the meaning of the word, but we may from the scope of the passage. The truth is, that the apostle sees in the literal Old Testament fact a higher spiritual significance. The ascent of the ark, in which God was present, into Zion, prefigured the ascent of Christ into heaven. As God came down to fight for his people, so Christ had descended to this earth for the salvation of men. As, on the return of the ark,

V. 19 Blessed be the Lord,

(Who) day by day beareth our burden,<sup>o</sup>

(Even) the God (who is) our salvation. [Selah.]

20 Our God is a God of deliverances,

And to Jehovah the Lord (belong) means of escape  
from death.<sup>p</sup>

21 But God will smite the head of his enemies,

The hairy scalp (which) goeth on still in his trespasses.

22 The Lord hath said : " From Bashan will I bring again,

I will bring (them) again from the depths of the sea.

the captives and the spoil appeared in the procession, so on the return of Christ in triumph to heaven (Col. ii. 15) He led captive sin and death and hell and all evil powers. As God had *taken* tribute among men, which he, however, as the victorious monarch of Israel, had given to Israel, so Christ also had taken gifts among men (in his human nature and through his work on earth) which he now, as ascended Lord, gave to men. The apostle sees that when a king takes, he takes to give, and therefore substitutes the one word for the other, without at all putting the one word as the *translation* of the other. He seizes the idea and represents it in its true fulfilment. Calvin has some excellent remarks on the principle of interpretation to be followed here.

19. The description of the great triumphal procession is here suddenly broken off with an ascription of praise to God as the protector and avenger of his people, and is not again resumed till verse 24.

BEARETH OUR BURDEN. The majesty of God and the tenderness of God are thus ever associated in holy Scripture. The same God who came once in awful glory to Sinai, and who now, accompanied by myriads of angels, enters into his sanctuary in Zion, is the God who bears the burden which is too heavy for us; or, perhaps, "who bears *us*," i.e. carries us, as a shepherd when he finds the lost sheep lays it upon his shoulder. See Critical Note.

20. MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM DEATH ;

lit. "for death," or "with reference to death." As Calvin observes, "With God are wonderful and various and secret methods, whereby he raises his children from death to life. . . . Even when he has suffered them to be in a manner swallowed up, he certainly furnishes marvellous means of escape," etc. Hupfeld compares the use of *ἐκβασίς* in 1 Cor. x. 13, and of *πόρος* in classical writers, Aesch. *Prom.* 59, *δεινὸς καὶ ἀμηχάνων εὐρεῖν πόρους*; Aristoph. *Eq.* 756 (769), *καὶ τῶν ἀμηχάνων πόρους εὐμηχάνους πορίζων*.

21. The reverse of the previous truth; God will take terrible vengeance on his enemies.

THE HAIRY SCALP, personified, i.e. the proud, bold, wilful, secure sinner; the thick head of hair being an image of youthful vigor and pride (as in the case of Samson and Absalom). Similarly in Greek, *κομᾶν*, to wear long hair, is used metaphorically, in the signification to *plume oneself*, to be proud, etc. Comp. Isa. xxii. 12.

22. I WILL BRING AGAIN. No object is supplied, but it is evident from the context that not Israel, as the older commentators generally supposed, but the enemies of Israel are meant. God will bring these back, wherever they may have fled in the hope of safety, and give them up to the vengeance of Israel. From Bashan in the east, and from the sea in the west, from the heights of the mountains, and from the depths of the sea (one or both of these antitheses may

23 That thou mayest wash thy foot in blood,  
That (the) tongue of thy dogs may have its portion  
from the enemy.”<sup>a</sup>

VI. 24 They have seen thy goings, O God,  
The goings of my God, my King, into the sanctuary  
25 Before went (the) singers, behind the players on stringed  
instruments,

In the midst of (the) maidens playing with timbrels :  
26 “In the congregations bless ye God,  
(Bless) the Lord, (ye that are) from the fountain of  
Israel.”

27 There (was) little Benjamin their ruler ;  
The princes of Judah, their company,  
The princes of Zebulun, (and) the princes of Naphtali.

be designed), they shall be brought back. The passage which really throws light upon this is the similar passage (first pointed out by Geier) in Amos ix. 1-3: “He that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into Sheōl, thence shall my hand take them : though they climb up into heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence ; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command,” etc.

23. THAT THOU MAYEST WASH. So it seems almost certain we ought to read with the change of one letter (*tirchaz*), instead of the present text (*timchaz*). This change is supported by the similar passage, lviii. 10 [11], and by the LXX, *πῶς ἂν βαφῆ*, and the Vulgate, *ut intingatur pes tuus*. Hengstenberg and Delitzsch endeavored to defend the received text by rendering “That thou mayest dash (them) (with) thy foot in blood.” But this is harsh and unnecessary.

24. The picture of the triumphal procession to the sanctuary is now resumed.

THEY HAVE SEEN, i.e. men in general have seen (hence equivalent to a passive, “Thy goings have been seen,” as the LXX, *ἐθεωρήθησαν*). Hupfeld, however,

supplies “the nations,” i.e. the hostile nations, as the subject, and explains the “goings of God” of the various acts already celebrated in the Psalm.

THY GOINGS, here not the march of God against his enemies, as in lxxvii. 13 [14] ; Hab. iii. 6, but, as is plain from the context, his solemn entry into the sanctuary. Here we have the visible, as before (verse 17), the invisible, part of the spectacle.

25. PLAYING WITH TIMBRELS, OR “beating the tamborine.” Comp. Ex. xv. 20 ; Judges xi. 34.

26. The words of this verse may be a sudden outburst of feeling on the part of the poet himself (comp. Judges v. 9), or, perhaps, the words sung by the chorus of maidens.

IN THE CONGREGATIONS. The masculine of the same plural noun occurs xxvi. 12. In both cases the plural may only denote *fulness*, *extension*, etc. (Gesen. § 108, 2a), so that it may mean only “in full assembly.” Böttcher compares the Latin *comitia* (of men), and *comitium* (of the place).

THE FOUNTAIN OF ISRAEL. The patriarch, Israel, is the fountain from which the whole nation has issued as a stream. Comp. Isa. xlviii. 1 ; li. 1.

27. Four of the tribes are mentioned



VII. 28 Thy God<sup>t</sup> hath commanded thy strength:

Strengthen,<sup>u</sup> O God, that which thou hast wrought  
for us from thy temple.<sup>x</sup>

29 Up to Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the beast of the reed,

The herd of bulls, with the calves of the peoples,  
Trampling under foot<sup>r</sup> those that have pleasure in silver:<sup>z</sup>

Disperse thou the peoples that delight in wars.

by name as taking part in the procession, these four being representatives of the rest, Benjamin and Judah of the southern kingdom, and Zebulun and Naphtali of the northern. The last two are especially named with reference to the part which they played in the war against Sisera, and the position they occupy in the song of Deborah (Judges v. 18). The ancient commentators strangely enough see in the mention of these tribes an allusion to, or rather a prophecy of, the birth-place of the apostles, and in Benjamin of the Apostle Paul, whom Tertullian, in reference to this Psalm, styles *parvus Benjamin*.

**LITTLE BENJAMIN.** So called, either because their ancestor was the *youngest* son of Jacob, or because it was in reality the smallest tribe (1 Sam. ix. 21). It is called **THEIR RULER**, because from that tribe came Israel's first king; hardly (as Delitzsch and Köst.), because the Temple, according to the promise (Deut. xxxiii. 12), and the division of the land (Josh. xviii. 16) lay within the borders of their territory. Hupfeld considers the dominion thus attributed to this tribe "only a prophetic idea of the restoration, which often (especially in Isaiah) is set forth as an inversion of things, according to which the last shall be first and the first last."

**THEIR COMPANY, or crowd**, Judah being the largest and most numerous of the tribes. See Critical Note.

28. The Psalmist now turns in prayer to that God who has ascended into his holy habitation, beseeching him thence to manifest his power in the subjugation of all enemies; he beholds the nations bringing tribute to him as to their sove-

rein; and finally calls upon them to join in loud praise and worship of him who rules in heaven, and who is the God of Israel.

**THY GOD.** According to the present text, there is here an abrupt address to Israel. But we should probably read (with many of the ancient versions), "O God, command thy strength." Comp. the similar expressions in xlii. 8 [9]; xliv. 4 [5]. See Critical Note.

**FROM THY TEMPLE** (or, perhaps, *tabernacle*, see note on ver. 7). This should probably be detached from the next verse, See Critical Note.

30. In verse 29 the voluntary submission of foreign powers is described. Here the prayer is that God would compel to submission those who oppose themselves.

**REBUKE**, as in ix. 5 [6].

**THE BEAST OF THE REED**, evidently a symbolical description of Egypt. Either the crocodile (called elsewhere *Leviathan*, lxxvi. 14, comp. Job xl. 24, and *tannin*, lxxiv. 13, Isa. li. 9, parall. with Rahab, i.e. Egypt) is meant; or the hippopotamus, in Job xl. 15 called *behemoth*, and said there (ver. 21) to be "among the lotus, in the covert of the reeds" (the reeds of the Nile are mentioned also in Isa. xix. 6; xxxv. 7). Probably the former, as the latter does not occur as a symbol of Egypt. Gesen. (on Isa. xxvii. 1) supposes the beast of the reed, i.e. "the dragon, the crocodile," to be a symbol of Babylon. Lowth (*Prael.*) and Schnurrer think that the lion is meant as a symbol of Syria; lions making their haunts in the thick reeds by the rivers of Mesopotamia, and also by the Jordan (Jer. xlix. 19). Ewald also says, "The lion, or the tiger, i.e.

- 31 The rich ones<sup>aa</sup> shall come out of Egypt ;  
Cush shall quickly stretch forth her hands unto God.

VIII. 32 O ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto God,  
Play (on the harp) to the Lord. [Selah.]

- 33 To him<sup>bb</sup> who rideth on the heaven of heavens (which  
are) of old : —

Lo, he uttereth his voice, a voice of strength.

- 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God,  
Whose majesty is over Israel and whose strength  
in the clouds.

the great king." Egypt is selected as an example of the nations of the world, being at this time, no doubt, the leading power. See Pusey's *Daniel*, p. 68. The E.V. "company of the spearmen" (the margin gives the true sense) follows Aben-Ezra, Kimchi, Ar., Mont., Pisc., Vat., Calvin ("genus armaturae acsi diceret lancearios"). The word rendered *company* is the same which in verse 10 is rendered *congregation* (in both, properly, *living creature*). Aben-Ezra refers to verse 10 to justify his interpretation, and observes that "spears are long, like a reed."

BULLS; lit. "strong ones." See on xxii. 12 [13]. These are the leaders of the nations, kings and captains, whereas the CALVES are explained by the addition of the PEOPLES, as the nations themselves.

TRAMPLING UNDER FOOT. The participle refers to God, not to the calves. Hence some would change it into the imperative, "Trample under foot." According to the received text, this would stand: "(Rebuke) those that prostrate themselves (singular for plural) with pieces (or bars) of silver," or, "so that they prostrate themselves with pieces of silver." This last, which is followed by the E.V., is the interpretation of Aben-Ezra, but it does not seem grammatically defensible. On this, and the rest of the verse, see the Critical Note. The general sense is sufficiently clear. The Psalmist anticipates the entire subjection of all the princes and nations of

the earth to the God who has now seated himself on his throne in Zion.

31. Egypt and Ethiopia are mentioned as examples (as Tyre, xlv. 12 [13], see note there) of the most wealthy and powerful nations, who will bring their treasures and pour out their gifts before God. Comp. Isa. xliii. 3; xlv. 14; lx. 5, etc.

SHALL QUICKLY STRETCH FORTH; lit. "shall make to run." The allusion is to stretching out the hands, not in prayer, but in the offering of gifts. The verb is in the feminine, Cush, or Ethiopia, being, as is usual with names of countries, regarded as feminine; but, by a confusion not unusual in Hebrew, we have the suffix of the masculine pronoun, "*his hands*," instead of "*her hands*."

32. The remaining verses of the Psalm are, in fact, prophetic. Standing in the midst of that future glory, which he anticipates so vividly that it seems already to be present, the Psalmist calls upon all the kingdoms of the world to praise God, whose glory is in heaven, but who has also chosen Zion, there to dwell, and to manifest his glory, as he manifests it in heaven.

33. THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS, i.e. the highest heavens (comp. Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27), said to be "of old" with reference to their creation (comp. cii. 25 [26]); and on this throning of God in the heavens, whilst at the same time he appears as the Redeemer and Protector of his people upon earth, see Deut. xxxiii. 26.

35 Terrible (art thou), O God, from thy sanctuaries, thou God of Israel ;

He giveth strength and much power unto the people.

Blessed be God.

HIS VOICE. Comp. xlv. 6 [7], and xxix. 3, etc., where the thunder is so called; God's thunder being the utterance of his power.

35. FROM THY SANCTUARIES. So cx. 2, "Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength *out of* Zion," as the seat of God's dominion, as the centre *from which* he exercises his power. The plural, as lxxiii. 17; Jer. li. 51; Ezek. xxi. 7 (cf.

Ps. lxxxiv. 1 [2]; cxxxii. 5, 7), as expressing the *various parts* of the one sanctuary.

HE GIVETH STRENGTH. Comp. xxix. 11; Isa. xl. 29. The word "strength" is repeated for the fourth time in five lines.

MUCH POWER. I have so rendered in order to express the *plural* noun; lit. "powers." It occurs nowhere else.

הַיָּהוָה, a peculiar form; inf. constr. instead of הַיָּהוָה, and apparently written thus because of the similarity of sound with the following הַיָּהוָה. This last, as it stands, is 2d masc. (the ה being expressed as in Isa. lviii. 3; Jer. iii. 5), though Ewald would make it a 3d fem. in an intransitive sense. This, I must think, would be preferable, were it supported by usage. But as the Kal is transitive, a different punctuation might be adopted, הַיָּהוָה . . . הַיָּהוָה, "as smoke is utterly driven away" (נִשְׁפָּן) being then here fem.) The LXX, Syr., Chald., Ar., Vulg., seem to have read הַיָּהוָה, making "the wicked" the subject.

בְּעֶרְבֹת. The plur. form of the word may be used here poetically for the sing. which occurs in the parallel passage Isa. xl. 3, or it may be employed purposely, the object of the Psalmist being not to speak of God's march only through *the 'Arabah* properly so called, — through the desert tract, that is, "which extends along the valley of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Gennesareth, now called by the Arabs El-Ghor," — but through all the desert regions by which he led his people. In Deut. i. 1 and ii. 8, the 'Arabah is the valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, which is called Wady el 'Arabah. The plural of the word is used of the country of Moab and the district about Jericho (Deut. xxxiv. 1, 8 and Josh. iv. 13, etc.), and generally of the tract east of the Jordan, 2 Sam. xv. 28 (K'ri). But the word has been strangely misinterpreted. The LXX, ἐν δυσμῶν, as in 2 Sam. iv. 7, from ערב (II. Gesen.), *to grow dark*, comp. the Arab. غروب, *to set* (of the sun), and so the Syr.; but Chald. and the Rabb. *the heavens or the clouds* (according to Mendelss. the highest heavens are so called, as having no stars, and so being waste; he renders *Aether-wüste*); Luther, "Der da *sanft* herfahret," deriving it from ערב (I. Gesen.) *to be sweet, pleasant*.

° **יָהּ** apocop. from **יְהוָה**, and this again apoc. from **יְהוֹיָה**. It occurs first in Ex. xv. 2. Hence borrowed here, cxviii. 14, and Isa. xii. 2, and elsewhere in the formula **יָהּ הִלְלֵנוּ**. The **יָהּ** prefixed is the so-called *Beth essentiae*. See above, xxxv. note <sup>b</sup>, and comp. liv. 6. Gesen. § 154, Rem. 3, **יְהוֹיָהּ**. The LXX, *μονοτρόπους*; Theod. *μοναχούς*. Comp. xxv. 16 and Isa. lviii. 7, *the lonely, the destitute*, who are here said to be brought back to a house (as exiles, wanderers, etc., restored to their home); others understand it of the *childless* who are blessed with a family, as cxiii. 9.

<sup>d</sup> **בְּשִׁשְׁרֹת**, only here; rendered by the LXX, *ἐν ἀνδρείᾳ*, and Theod., *ἐν εὐθύτησι*; Symm., better, *εἰς ἀπόλυσιν*, and the Syr. “*into prosperity*.” Comp. **בְּשִׁשְׁרֹן**, Eccl. ii. 21, from **בָּשָׂר**, syn. with **אֲשֶׁר**, **יֶשֶׁר**; according to Hupfeld, a *later* Aramaic form for this last; hence, properly, “*the right condition*,” and so “*freedom, prosperity*,” etc. The Syriac transl. employs here a word from the same root.

° **הִנֵּה**. The Hiph. is here construed with double accus. (like the Kal, Prov. vii. 17). “*The imperf. is the relat. pret. with reference to the situation in ver. 8*” (Hupfeld), or simply the aor. of repeated past action. **נַחֲלָהָהּ** (by which we are to understand the *people*, not the *land*) is certainly the object of this verb, and is not to be joined (according to the accents) with **וְנִנְחָלָהּ**, which follows. This would necessitate the rendering: “*Thine inheritance, even when (or, and that when) it was weary*,” etc. <sup>h</sup> epexeget., as in 1 Sam. xxviii. 3; Amos iii. 11; iv. 10; but this is without point. The participle is here used without the art. hypothetically, Ewald, § 341 *b*. On **נִרְבִּיתָ** (plur. for sing., as cx. 3) see on liv. 6 [8]. The construction as given above is that of the LXX, *βροχῆν ἐκούσιον ἀφοριεῖς τῇ ἀληθονομίᾳ σου*.

<sup>f</sup> **יְהוֹרֵן**. The ancient versions wrongly derived this from **יָרַד**, *to love*, hence LXX, *τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ*; Symm., *ἀγαπητοὶ ἐγένοντο*, as explained by Syr. and Jerome in the sense of being friends, and so joined in alliance. It is the fut. energet. from **נָדַר**, as the Rabb. rightly give it. It seems to have been the fate of almost every word in this Psalm to have been misunderstood. Even the following **נִיחָה** was derived from **נָאָה**, *to be beautiful*, whereas it is the fem. of the adj. **נִיחָה**, as Jer. vi. 2.

<sup>g</sup> In the interpretation of this and the next verse two questions have to be considered: first, the meaning of the separate words, and then the construction of the sentences.

First as regards the words. **שִׁפְתֵּיכֶם** occurs also Ezek. xl. 43. (1) According to the Rabb. *pots, dirty vessels*. They explain the passage thus: Though ye lie now in dirt and squalor and wretchedness among the pots, yet ye shall be as the wings of a dove, etc., i.e. bright and



beautiful. Ye have been in gloom and misery ; ye shall be in peace and prosperity. (2) Others (following the Chald. תְּחִימִין, and Jerome, *terminos*) understand *boundaries*, which they explain either (as Luther and Geier) of the *ranks* of battle, in which the army, with the light dancing on its plumes and lances, is compared to the dove ; or (as Böttch., Stier, and Hengst.) of the boundaries of fields, etc. the allusion being to shepherd life, or country life in general. (3) According to J. D. Michaelis, the word denotes *drinking-troughs* (from the Arab.

سَفَت, *to drink*, comp. Judges v. 11). (4) But there can be little doubt that it should rather be rendered, like the kindred word מִשְׁפָּחִים, Gen. xlix. 14 ; Judges v. 16, *sheepfolds, hurdles*, from שָׁפַח, *to set, place*. (So the E. V. has *sheepfolds* in the last passage, whereas in the first it has *panniers*). According to (2), (3), (4), the allusion is to a quiet, indolent country life ; the strong men who should have furnished recruits for the army being content with their usual rustic occupations, busying themselves with their cattle, etc.

פָּרַשׁ commonly, both in Kal and Piel, means *to spread abroad*, and hence the LXX, ἐν τῷ διαστέλλειν τὸν ἐπουράνιον βασιλεῖς (Th. ἐπ' αὐτῆς) χιονοθήσονται ἐν Σελμών. And so Stier understands it of the appointment of the heads of the tribes and princes throughout the country ; but in Zech. ii. 10, *to scatter*, and so the Niph., Ezek. xvii. 21 ; and this meaning is clearly preferable here.

תִּשָּׁלֵג, 3d fem. Hiph. in a neut. sense (Böttcher makes it 2d masc. "Thou, O God, makest it snow," etc.), either *it snows* or *snowed* (according to analogy of other verbs, though this verb does not occur in that sense), or *it was white as snow*. Gesen. § 53, 2. The voluntative form is to be explained here by its use in the apodosis when the protasis is hypothetical. It denotes the consequence which will happen, supposing something else happens. Gesen. § 128, 2.

צִלְמִין. In the only other passage where the word occurs, the name of a mountain near Shechem, Judges ix. 48. Some (as Böttcher) suppose another lofty peak of the Bashan range to be meant, and this may be supported by the remarkable reading of the Alex. ms. in Judg. ix. ὄρος ἑμμών ; and others, as Theod., the Chald., and the Rabb., and Luther, take it as an appell. = צֶלֶם, *shadow, gloom*, etc.

Secondly, as regards the construction. אִם may (1) introduce the protasis as a particle of condition (*if*), or of time (*when*), and then the apodosis may begin at בְּכַפֵּי ר', as Hengst. takes it and Delitzsch, "*Though ye lie (or, when ye lie), etc. . . ye are (or, ye shall be as) the wings of a dove,*" etc. Or (2) אִם may be used, as in formulae of

swearing, to express a negative. So J. D. Michaelis "Lie *not* among," etc. Or (3) as an interrogative, "Will ye lie," etc. (so Hupfeld and Böttcher), implying *surely ye will not*; comp. 1 Kings i. 27; Micah iv. 9; Job vi. 12, in which case the particle of comparison only need be supplied in the next clause, "*As* the wings," etc. [or the interrogative force of the particle may be explained by taking it in its usual conditional sense, and supposing an ellipse: "*If* ye lie — what then, what will happen," etc. Comp. Isa. xxix. 16].

נִהְפָּה, part. fem. Niph. which *may* be predicate to פָּנִיפִי (comp. 1 Sam. iv. 15; Micah iv. 11; Ewald, § 317 a), but may also refer to יִנְהָה.

בָּהּ. The reference of the pron. is obscure. It is commonly rendered *in it*, or *because of it*, and the reference is assumed to be to the Holy Land, as in ver. 11 [E. V. 10] and Isa. viii. 21, in both of which passages the pron. is so used; but it must be confessed that there is something singular in this vague reference to an idea scarcely implied even in the context. (2) It may be better, perhaps, to take the pron. as referring by anticipation to the following צִלְמוֹן, as in ix. 12 [13]. (3) Others refer the pron. to *the dove*, as well as the verb תִּשְׁלַג following: "On her (i.e. the dove) it was white as snow," alluding to the brilliancy of the plumage. (4) Böttcher takes the pron. in a neut. sense, and the verb תִּשְׁלַג, as remarked above, as 2d pers. masc., and the prep. בָּ in בִּפְרִשְׁךָ as marking not the time, but the manner, of the action: "With the scattering of kings, O Almighty, *therewith* (בָּהּ) thou makest snow fall upon Zalmon," which he explains to mean that God so discomfited the kings, so scattered them and their armies in wild disarray over the heights of one of the Bashan range, that it looked like a thick fall of snow. Symm., ὁπότε κατεμέμζεν ὁ ἰκανὸς βασιλεύειν αὐτήν, ὡς χιονισθεῖσα ἦν Σελμών.

<sup>h</sup> גְּבֻנָּה, from a sing. גְּבֻנָּה, which however does not occur, usually regarded as an abstract quadriliteral noun, and compared with נִצְפִיחָה and similar forms; but these, as Hupfeld observes, are not parallel instances, inasmuch as they do not double their last radical. He considers the termination ך- here to be the same as ך-, which, as well as ך- (and ך-, ך- formed from a nunnated accusative termination ך-), commonly appears as an adjectival termination, and sometimes also in substantives. It might be regarded as a denom. abstr. subst. (like אֶלְמוֹן, *widowhood*, for אֶלְמוֹן); but here, again, there is no doubling of the last radical. Hence he decides that the word is an adj., (1) because of the doubling of the final consonant as in רִצְצֹן, רִצְצֹן, and ך- in צִירְמִים, תִּרְשָׁמִים; (2) because in ver. 17 [E. V. 16] it is clearly an adj., agreeing with תִּרְשָׁמִים; (3) because in Chald. the adj. גְּבֻנִין, *tumidus, super-*

*ciliosus*, occurs. Hence 'הֲרִיג' (though the noun is in the constr.) is not to be explained *mons gibbositatis*, "a mountain of many-peakedness" (if such a word may be coined), but either "a mountain of many-peaked (mountains)," or else הֲרִי must be taken collectively as = הָרִים. (The above is from Hupfeld). It is remarkable that the older versions, while they give Zalmon, do not give Bashan here as a proper name. LXX, ὄρος Θεοῦ, ὄρος πῖον, ὄρος τετυρωμένον, ὄρος πῖον. (So in xxii. 13 they render בָּשָׁן by the same adj., ταῦροι πῖονες). Symm., ὄρος εὐτροφίας, ὄρος ὑψηλότατον, ὄρος εὐτροφίας; Jerome, *mons Dei, mons pinguis; mons excelsus, mons pinguis*.

<sup>1</sup> הֲרִיגִין. The word occurs only here, and has been wrongly translated by the Chald. and others as = רָקַר, *to hop*. The other ancient versions are nearer the mark. LXX, ὑπολαμβάνετε; Aq., Th., ἐρίζετε; Symm., περισπουδάξτε; Jerome, *contenditis*; Vulg., *suspiciamini*. The verb is to be explained by the cogn. Arab. root مَد, *oculis intentis, insidiose observare*, "to watch jealously." The N. T. synonymes are παρατηρεῖν, ἐνεδρεύειν.

<sup>k</sup> רַבּוּתִים, dual of רַבּוּת, which is either (1) a noun abstr. = רַבּוּת, and so *two myriads*; or (2) a plur. contracted from רַבּוּתִיּוֹת, Ezra ii. 69, in which case it would be (as a plur. with dual termination added) "*two series of myriads*," as חֲוִימֹתִים, "the double line of walls," לִיחֹתִים, "the double series of planks of a ship."

In אֲלֶפֶס שְׁנָאן, lit. "thousands of repetition," we have another ἄπ λ. שְׁנָאן = שְׁנֵי. The Targ. and Saad. render "thousands of *angels*." LXX, χιλιάδες ἐθνηγούντων; Jerome, *millia abundantium*, as if it were שְׁנֵי. Comp. Dan. vii. 10; Numb. x. 36.

<sup>1</sup> אֲדֹרְךָ בְּמִינֵי בְּקָרְשׁ. This gives no satisfactory sense. "Grammatically," says Hupfeld, "it could only mean: *The Lord is, or was, among them* (the myriads of the angelic host), or *with them* (as lx. 12), or *rides (rode) upon them* (the chariots) *to Sinai into the sanctuary* (ver. 25), or *with holiness* (majesty), which would be a glance back at the theophany on Sinai; according to the older translators and Hengst. with reference to the tradition of the giving of the law by the mediation of angels, Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2, which is supposed to rest on Deut. xxxiii. 2, where, however, we have only the usual representation of God in the O. T. as accompanied by angels, without special reference to the giving of the law. But this does not suit the context, according to which only an application or comparison of Sinai with the present abode of God is in place, as has been felt by the Rabb. and almost all interpreters, who have consequently inserted the particle of comparison, 'as on Sinai,' which however is grammatically inadmissible. Hence

the more recent interpreters generally follow L. de Dieu, 'Sinai is (now) in the sanctuary (on Zion)'; Sinai, as it were, having become appellative; either (as L. de Dieu) for the theophany or glory of God among the angelic host on Sinai, which is now to be seen in the sanctuary on Zion; or more simply, according to Schnurrer, Sinai stands by meton. for the abode of God, which is now transferred to Zion (see the classical parallels quoted in Merrick's *Annot. on the Psalms*; Mart. iv. 60, 'In medio Tibure Sardinia est'; Juv. *Sat.* iii. 62, 'Jampridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes'; Themist. *Orat.* 31, μετελήλυθεν ὁ Ἑλικὼν εἰς τὸν Βόσπορον; and the well known, 'Hic Rhodus,' etc., and similar instances in all languages); in either case the idea being that Zion is a second Sinai. But suitable as the sense would be, this would be a strange way of expressing it; for not only is the *now* wanting, but also the name of the new sanctuary, and חֲקִירָשׁ alone could scarcely form an opposition to Sinai. Probably the reading is wrong, and we ought to read בָּא מִסִּינַי for בָּם סִינַי, *hath come from Sinai into the sanctuary* (חֲקִירָשׁ with the article in this connection being intelligible enough as meaning Zion). So Pott., Köst., Maur., Olsh., as an allusion to Deut. xxxiii. 2, where the same phrase occurs." I accept this emendation in part, but I think the gap is larger; we cannot dispense with בָּם, without which this sentence stands abrupt and dissevered from the rest. Supposing the text to have stood originally אֲרָנִי בָם [בָּא מִ]סִּינַי, it is easy to see how the letters between brackets, from their similarity to those immediately preceding, might have slipped out altogether.

<sup>m</sup> בְּאֲרָם, "*among men*," as the region in which, instead of "*from men*," as the persons from whom, the gifts were taken; or, as Hengst., "*among men*" = upon earth, in opp. to heaven. J. D. Michaelis renders "*consisting of men*," i.e. who have thus become the servants of God (with reference to Eph. iv. 11, etc.). So Büttcher — who supposes prisoners taken in war and devoted to the service of the Temple (*nethinim*) — and De Wette, who thinks that proselytes are meant. The rendering of the Ap. in Ephes. may be perhaps a free rendering of the passage, ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις; but it is remarkable that the Chald. has the same, יְהִיבְתָּא לְחִוּן מִחֶזֶן לְבִנֵי נְשָׂא. As the Targum on the Psalms is manifestly composite, some portions being much earlier than others, this rendering *may* have been earlier than the time of the apostle.

<sup>n</sup> וְאֶה סִבְרִים. With what are these words to be connected? Many take them with the previous verse, and regard them as dependent either upon שְׁבִיחָה, or upon לְקַחְתָּ, repeating the prep. בְּ before 'ס, "and even among the rebellious thou hast taken gifts" (so Delitzsch). But in this case the rest of the sentence, לְשִׁכְנִי ר' א', stands very lamely,



“that Jah Elohim may dwell,” i.e. as Delitzsch explains, “on Zion,” or as J. D. Michaelis “among them.” Others would connect this last clause with the words “Thou hast ascended.” So Lee (*Heb. Gram.* § 241, 18), “*Thou, O Lord God, hast ascended up on high (there) to dwell; thou hast taken captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for man* (i.e. mankind), *nay even (for) the rebellious ones.*” This, however, is an unnecessary transposition. The inf. constr. לִשְׁכֹּן here takes the place of the fut. act. or pass. See on lxii. note <sup>8</sup>; either, “the rebellious shall dwell with Jah,” so Hupfeld who takes יָהּ as the accus. after the verb of dwelling, as v. 5; lxxx. 2; or, as seems to me preferable, “the rebellious (shall be) for the dwelling of Jah,” i.e. “Jah shall dwell among them.” We thus get the proper force of the particle וְיָאֵר, “*yea, even the rebellious, those who would not willingly bring gifts, must nevertheless yield.*”

<sup>9</sup> יִשְׁעֵם-לָנוּ. This verb (like נָשָׂא and סָבַל) seems to combine the two meanings, (1) *to put a burden upon another*, and (2) *to bear a burden*. In the former sense it is construed with עָל. Of those who adopt (1), some, as Calvin and the E. V., take it in a good sense, “who daily loadeth us (with benefits)”; others, as L. de Dieu and De Wette, make יִשְׁעֵם-לָנוּ the protasis to what follows, “If any lay a burden upon us, (still) God is,” etc.; others, again, as Geier, take הָאֵל as the subject, “He who lays (or laid) a burden upon us is the God who is also our salvation,” i.e. this burden was a discipline, and so a means of blessing. But these constructions are harsh, and (2) seems preferable. Comp. Isa. xli. 1, 3; Zech. xii. 3. Then לָנוּ either stands here (according to later usage) for the accus., as Hupfeld takes it (and so Jerome, *portavit nos*); or, which is better, retains its proper force as a dat. commodi, “Who beareth for us (our burden).” So Ewald and Delitzsch; and De Wette says of this rendering, “besser vielleicht.”

<sup>10</sup> לְמִנְיֵת הַיָּצִאוֹת, lit. “means of escape for death,” or *with reference to*, i.e. *against*, or *from* death. So Ewald explains, “God gives to Israel the means to escape from death.” Similarly De Wette, “Vom Tode Rettung”; Zunz, “Ausgänge vom Tode.” And the E. V., “issues from death.” (2) Others, “goings forth to death,” i.e. God has means of leading the enemy to death. So Symm., αἱ εἰς θάνατον ἔξοδοι, and so Rashi and Kimchi. The LXX, Jerome, and Calvin render “of death.”

<sup>11</sup> מִיָּהוּ. This has been commonly taken as = מִיָּהוּ, either (1) distributively, *of every one* of them (the enemies), which involves, however, a very harsh ellipse, “that the tongues of thy dogs (may drink the blood) of the enemies, of every one of them”; so Symm., ὅπως . . . λάψῃ ἡ γλ. τ. κ. σ. ἀπὸ ἐκάστου τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου; or (2) “*of it*,” i.e. the blood.

So Calvin and the E. V., "the tongue of thy dogs *in the same*," and app. the LXX, *παρ' αὐτοῦ*. According to Rashi we have here the verb *מָנָה* (as in Job vii. 3; Jonah ii. 1; Dan. i. 10); "the tongue of thy dogs hath made it (the blood) of the enemies its food"; lit. hath prepared it. But it would be better then, as Hupfeld observes, to make לָשׁוֹן the dat., "He hath given it as a portion to the tongue of thy dogs." Simonis, however, is probably right in referring מָנָה to a noun מֶנֶן, *portion*, and so I have rendered in the text. So too in the Arab. vers. of R. Yapheth; *pars ejus*. It is unnecessary, therefore, with Olsh. to read מָנָה, as in lxiii. 11.

<sup>7</sup> רִיחַ cannot be referred to רָרַם, but to רָרָה. It is the part. with the suff., with Tsere instead of Kametz, and construed with the accus. instead of the more usual רָ. The suff. refers not to the enemy, "their subduer" (as Hengst.), but "their (Israel's) ruler." The Syr. *ܠܡܢܐ*, *in rest*, or *tranquillity*.

<sup>8</sup> רִגְמָתָם. Kimchi derives the word from רָגַם, *to stone*, and renders *their heap*, i.e. "the princes of Judah (with) the heap (or crowd) of the common people." But the verb רָגַם is always used of *stoning* as a punishment appointed by the law, and the noun could hardly therefore mean *a heap* of stones, and so *a crowd*. Either, therefore, we must suppose the root signification of רָגַם to be that of the Arab. رَجَمَ, *congerere*, or we must conclude that we have here a false reading for רִגְמָתָם (comp. lxiv. 3 and lv. 15). The מ and the ש are very similar in the old Hebrew character. Hengst., who always defends the Masoretic text at the expense of any interpretation however far-fetched, renders the word *stoning*, and observes: "Judah is called the *stoning* of the enemies, in allusion to David, who put to death by a stone Goliath, the representative of the might of the world"!

<sup>9</sup> צִוָּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, *Thy God (O Israel) hath commanded*. This sudden address to Israel introduces confusion, and disturbs the parallelism. It is therefore better to read with all the older versions צִוָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

<sup>10</sup> עֲזָרָה, incorrectly for עֲזָרָה, and this for עֲזָרָה. By the LXX, *δυναμωσον*; Symm., *ἐνίσχυσον*, taken transitively. And so Calvin and the E. V. *strengthen*. But elsewhere עֲזָרָה is always intrans., *to be strong*, *to show oneself strong*. But then it is difficult to explain the pron. זֶה, which must in this case be accus., "show thyself strong *in that which* thou hast wrought." This gives no satisfactory sense. It should rather be "in that which thou *wilt* work." Others, again, take זֶה as the nom., "*Thou who hast*," etc., but not Ewald (as Hupfeld asserts), who renders, "Glänzend mach', Gott, was du uns bereitet." He therefore takes the verb as transitive, and this on the whole perhaps is best.

<sup>x</sup> מְהִיכֶלְךָ. This cannot be rendered, as the E. V., “*Because of thy temple*” (although Symm. has *διὰ τὸν ναόν σου*). It can only mean “*From thy temple*,” and manifestly belongs to the preceding verse, as indeed is confirmed by the pausal form of the word. The following יַעֲלֵה, “*up to Jerusalem*,” is not to be connected with this, but with the verb יוֹבִיחֶנּוּ.

<sup>y</sup> מִתְחַרְסִים. This is commonly rendered *submitting*, or *prostrating themselves* (the Hiph. of חָרַס, *calcere*, meaning *se calcandum praeberere* = *prosternere*, which is defended by Prov. vi. 3). But why should the Psalmist pray, *rebuken* the beast of the reeds (i.e. Egypt), etc. whilst they prostrate themselves? If already prostrate, they would not need the rebuke. Hence it has been attempted to render this, *ut supplex veniat* (Flam.), and the E. V. “*till every one submit himself* ;” but this is grammatically indefensible. The truth is, that the meaning commonly assigned to the verb is wrong. The Hithp. has here the force of the Greek middle, *to trample under foot for oneself*, and so it should be rendered in Prov. vi. 3. Then the part. must be taken, not with the nouns immediately preceding, but as a predicate of God (as in text). Hupfeld, indeed, says that the part. cannot be connected with anything going before, and would correct מִתְחַרְסִים imperat., as afterwards בִּזְרֵי, instead of בָּזֵר. But this seems unnecessary. [Bunsen, I find, retains the participle]. Symm. has the right sense of the part. though with a wrong construction, *συνόδῳ παμμεγεθῶν . . . τοῖς διαλακτίζουσι*.

<sup>z</sup> בְּרַצֵּי פ', “*with bars of silver*.” If the interpretation given above of מִתְחַרְסִים is correct, it is clear that the received punctuation here cannot be defended, and there can be little doubt that we should point בְּרַצֵּי, “*(trampling) on them who have pleasure in silver*.” This is supported by R. Yapheth's rendering, “*conculcatus ob studium argenti*,” which shows that he connected it with the root רָצָה. Four mss. read the word without Dagesh, and the older versions do not seem to have had the present reading. Symm., *τοὺς εὐδοκίτους ὡς δοκιμὴν ἀργυρίου*; LXX, *τοὺς δεδοκιμασμένους τῷ ἀργυρίῳ*; Jerome, *in vitulis populorum calcitrantium contra rotas argenteas*. The Syr. for מִתְחַרְסִים has “*who are clothed with silver*.”

<sup>aa</sup> חֲשִׁמֻנִּים, a quadrilit. not occurring elsewhere, but apparently the same as חֲשִׁמֻנִּים, lxxviii. 31, lit. *fat ones*, i.e. “*great men, princes*,” etc., as the Chald. and Rabb. On the other hand, the LXX have πρέσβεις, and the Syr. “*ambassadors*.” It is either formed, Hupfeld says, from חֲשִׁמֻנִּים with prosthetic ח (as elsewhere א and ה) — but where is there any parallel to this? — or from the Arab. حشم, with the termination ִן, which is more probable. Michaelis, *Hasmoneans*, i.e. inhabitants of the Egyptian province Aschmunim.

<sup>bb</sup> סָלָה . Hupfeld finds the Selah here out of place (though there are other instances, see lx. 6), as disturbing the construction, and ingeniously suggests that the reading should be סָלָה לְרִיב . As the text now stands the prep. לְ is out of place, unless with Schn. we connect 'לְרִיב with שָׁרָה לְאֵל .

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## PSALM LXIX.

WHEN, and by whom this Psalm was written, we have no very certain clue to guide us; unless, indeed, we are disposed to accept the authority of the inscription, which tells us it was written by David. All that is certain from the general tenor of the Psalm is, that it was written under circumstances of great and unmerited suffering, by one who was persecuted for righteousness' sake. The zeal which he had shown for the service and honor of God had provoked the hostility of bad men against him, and made him the object of their unholy mockery. In the former part of the Psalm we have the fact of this persecution detailed, in the form of a humble complaint to God, together with an earnest prayer for deliverance. In the latter part there is a marked change of feeling. The sad, humble, subdued, entreating tone in which he had spoken, turns suddenly into a strong outburst of indignant execration. One curse is heaped upon another, till the whole terrible series is completed in the prayer that those who have persecuted and mocked God's afflicted servant may have their names blotted out from his book of life.

In some of its features this Psalm bears much resemblance to Psalms xxxv. and cix. In all three Psalms there is the same deep sense of grievous wrong, of innocence unjustly persecuted, and in all alike the same burning indignation is poured in a hot lava-stream of anathemas upon the persecutors. (See note on xxxv. 22).

In other respects there are points of coincidence between this and the fortieth Psalm, which seem to justify the conclusion that the two were written by the same person. In each the sacred poet describes his affliction as a sinking in the deep mire (xl. 2 [3], lxix. 2 [3]; in the one we have "they that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head," lxix. 4 [5]; in the other, "mine iniquities . . . are more than the hairs of my head," xl. 12 [13]; in both there is the same hope that the triumphant issue of the suffering endured will be a subject of joy to the righteous, and the strengthening of their faith,



xl. 3 [4], 16 [17], lxix. 6 [7], 32 [33]. This last passage, again, bears a striking resemblance to xxii. 26 [27], so that Hitzig considers it certain that the twenty-second Psalm must also be ascribed to the same author.<sup>1</sup> That author he supposes to be Jeremiah. Seiler, and others before him, had thrown out the same suggestion with regard to Psalms xl. and lxix. The grounds on which this view rests are: (1) the character of the suffering, which was occasioned by zeal for God's house, the humility of the sufferer, and the scorn with which he was treated, all of which correspond with what we read Jer. xv. 15-18; (2) the murderous hate of the men of Anathoth towards Jeremiah, xi. 18-23, which may be compared with the complaint of the Psalmist verse 8 [9]; (3) the close of the Psalm, verse 34-36 [35-37], which is, as it were, a summary of what Jeremiah foretold in his Book of Restoration, xxx.-xxxiii.; (4) the peculiar nature of Jeremiah's suffering, who was cast by the princes into the dungeon or cistern of Malchiah, where he sank down in the mire. To this the prophet is supposed to allude in Lam. iii. 53-58, and, according to Hitzig, this Psalm was his prayer whilst he lay in the cistern or pit (comp. ver. 15). Delitzsch, in his introduction to the Psalm, thinks this far from improbable; indeed, he inclines strongly to Hitzig's view, and confesses that the Psalm can be explained much more satisfactorily on the supposition that Jeremiah, than on the supposition that David, was the author; adding, at the same time, that he has not the courage to pronounce the inscription false. When he comes to the end of his commentary on the Psalm, after again arguing that the last verses present no difficulty if we suppose them to have been written by the prophet, he with strange inconsistency turns round and says: "Considering the relation of the New Testament to this Psalm, we hold fast to the inscription, (A Psalm) of David."

Yet if any inference can be drawn from style and language, if criticism have any testing power, it would hardly be too much to say that this Psalm could not have been written by David. Moreover, to what possible circumstances in David's life could verses eleven, twelve, and twenty-one refer, or what meaning could verse thirty-five have in his mouth? The fact that it is cited as his in Rom. xi. 9 proves nothing, for "David" there means nothing more than the Book of Psalms.

This has usually been regarded as a Messianic Psalm. No portion of the Old Testament Scriptures is more frequently quoted in the New, with the exception of Psalm xxii. When Jesus drives the buyers and

<sup>1</sup> In this Ewald differs from him, though he admits that xl. and lxix. are by the same author, but he adds several other Psalms to the list, xxv., xxxiv., xxxviii., li., lxx., lxxi., lxxxviii., cix.

sellers from the Temple, John ii. 17, his disciples are reminded of the words of verse 9 *a*. When it is said, John xv. 25, that the enemies of Jesus hated him without a cause, and this is looked upon as a fulfilment of Scripture, the reference is probably to verse 4 (though it may be also to xxxv. 19). To him, and the reproach which he endured for the sake of God, St. Paul (Rom. xv. 3) refers the words of this Psalm, verse 9 *b*, "the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." In verse 12 we have a foreshadowing of the mockery of our Lord by the soldiers in the praetorium, Matt. xxvii. 27-30; in verse 21, the giving of the vinegar and the gall found their counterpart in the scenes of the crucifixion, Matt. xxvii. 34. In John xix. 28 there is an allusion, probably, to verse 21 of this Psalm (and to xxii. 15). The imprecation in verse 25 is said, in Acts i. 20, to have been fulfilled in the case of Judas Iscariot, though, as the words of the Psalm are plural, the citation is evidently made with some freedom. According to Rom. xi. 9, 10, the rejection of Israel may best be described in the words of verses 22, 23.

It will be observed that many of these quotations are made generally, by way of illustration and application, rather than as prophecies which have received fulfilment. Enough, however, remains to justify the Messianic sense of the Psalm, provided our interpretation be fair and sober. The broad principle laid down in the introduction to the twenty-second Psalm applies here. The history of prophets and holy men of old is a typical history. They were, it may be said, representative men, suffering and hoping, not for themselves only, but for the nation whom they represented. In their sufferings, they were feeble and transient images of the Great Sufferer who by his sufferings accomplished man's redemption; their hopes could never be fully realized but in the issue of his work, nor their aspirations be truly uttered save by his mouth. But confessions of sinfulness and imprecations of vengeance, mingling with these better hopes and aspirations, are a beacon to guide us in our interpretation. They teach us that the Psalm is not a prediction; that the Psalmist does not put himself in the place of the Messiah to come. They show us that here, as indeed in all Scripture, two streams, the human and the Divine, flow on in the same channel. They seem destined to remind us that if prophets and minstrels of old were types of the Great Teacher of the church, yet that they were so only in some respects, and not altogether. They bear witness to the imperfection of those by whom God spake in time past unto the fathers, in many portions and in many ways, even whilst they point to him who is the living word, the perfect revelation of the Father.

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions, each of eighteen verses. These, however, again admit of subdivision as follows :

I. (1) The lamentation, which declares the miserable condition of the Psalmist (ver. 1-4).

(2) The fuller account of his persecutions, especial prominence being given to the fact that his sufferings are *for the sake of God and of his house*, and the reproach to which he is exposed in consequence (ver. 5-12).

(3) The prayer to God for deliverance, urged both upon the ground of his great misery and of God's great mercy (ver. 13-18).

II. (1) He turns back, and again dwells upon the malice and cruelty of his enemies (ver. 19-21).

(2) And then, roused by the recollection of his wrongs, conscious that he is on the side of God and of truth, and that he has been treated with shameful injustice, he calls for God's worst vengeance upon his enemies (ver. 22-28).

(3) Lastly, we have the threefold expression of joy ; first, as regards God's deliverance of himself, and his own acknowledgment of that mercy (ver. 29-31) ; then, as regards the encouragement hereby given to all the righteous (ver. 32, 33) ; and, finally, in prospect that God will save Zion, and build up the cities of Judah (ver. 34-36).

[For the Precentor. "Upon Lilies."\* (A Psalm) of David].

1 SAVE me, O God,

For (the) waters have come in unto (my) soul.

2 I have sunk in the mud of the abyss, where there is no standing-place.

I have come into the depths of the waters,

And a flood hath overwhelmed me.

1-4. These contain the cry for help, and the description of the Psalmist's miserable condition.

1. THE WATERS, frequently occurring as an image of extreme danger, as in xviii. 4 [5] and 16 [17] ; xxxii. 6 ; xlii. 7 [8], and often.

UNTO (MY) SOUL, expressive of a peril threatening the life, as in Jer. iv. 10 ; Jonah ii. 6. Calvin, however, thinks that *soul* is put for *heart*, and that the expression denotes that the waters had

not only covered him, but had forced their way down his throat.

2. MUD OF THE ABYSS, perhaps not simply "deep mud," as the similar expression in xl. 2 [3], "mire of mud," for in verse 15 "the abyss" occurs alone, as parallel with "flood of waters." The word FLOOD in these two verses is the well-known Shibboleth which the Ephraimites were unable to pronounce (Judges xii. 6). It occurs again, Isa. xxvii. 12, "flood of the river."

3 I am weary with my calling, my throat is parched,  
Mine eyes have failed, whilst I wait for my God.

4 More than the hairs of my head are they that hate me  
without cause,

Strong are (they that are) my destroyers,<sup>b</sup> mine enemies  
without reason : —

That which I did not rob, then must I restore.

5 O God, THOU knowest<sup>c</sup> my foolishness,  
And my guiltinesses have not been hid from thee.

3. IS PARCHED, or “dried up”; lit. “is made hot,” “burned,” as in cii. 3 [4], where it is said of the bones (comp. Job xxx. 30). See xxii. 15 [16].

WHILST I WAIT. The part. is in apposition with the subject contained in the pronominal suffix, as Hupfeld rightly explains the construction. It was an example, says Calvin, of a rare and wonderful patience, to wait upon God in so deplorable a condition, and adds, “when he speaks of his throat being parched, this is not as though he had left off praying, but rather intimates that though his bodily strength failed, the power of his faith did not give way.”

4. MORE THAN THE HAIRS. Comp. xl. 12 [13].

WITHOUT CAUSE, as in xxxv. 19; xxxviii. 19 [20]. To this passage, probably, allusion is made by our Lord, John xv. 25 : ὅτι ἐμίσησάν (LXX, οἱ μισοῦντες) με ὡρεάν, words which he introduces with ἵνα πληρωθῇ ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος ἐν τῇ νόμῳ αὐτῶν. The manner of citation plainly shows how we are to understand ἵνα πληρωθῇ; what was true, in some sense, even of the suffering Israelite under the law, was still more true of him in whom was no sin, and whom, therefore, his enemies did indeed hate without cause.

MY DESTROYERS. So the text at present stands, but various attempts have been made to correct it. See Critical Note.

THAT WHICH I DID NOT ROB, etc. The expression seems to be proverbial. It is equivalent to saying, “I am treated

as guilty though I am innocent.” Comp. Jer. xv. 10, and the similar complaint in Ps. xxxv. 11.

THEN MUST I RESTORE. The particle of time seems to be used here almost instead of the demonstrative pronoun, = “What I did not rob, *that* I must restore”; the particle may be used, as Hupfeld explains, to mark the consequence which *then* immediately follows from the robbery, or, as I think more likely, to mark the consequence of the calumnies of his enemies. The Prayer-book version gives the sense very well : “I paid them the things that I never took.”

5. Then follows the appeal to God from the unrighteousness of men. The manner in which this appeal is made is, however, unusual. Generally speaking, under such circumstances, we find a strong assertion of the integrity and innocence of the sufferer, and a complaint that he suffers unjustly; here, on the contrary, we find him appealing to God’s knowledge of his *foolishness* and his *transgressions*. The passage presents a great difficulty to Augustine in his attempt to explain the whole Psalm as a prophecy of Christ; and he escapes from the difficulty by saying that the words apply to the members of Christ and not to the Head. Some would explain this : Thou knowest exactly what the *extent* of my foolishness is, and that I am not so guilty as others would represent me, “Thou knowest *what* my foolishness, etc. is.” Calvin understands the words ironically; Dathe, hypotheti-



- 6 Let not them that wait on thee be ashamed through me,  
O Lord, Jehovah (God of) hosts.  
Let not them be confounded, through me, that seek thee,  
O God of Israel.
- 7 For for thy sake I have borne reproach,  
Confusion hath covered my face.
- 8 I have become estranged from my brethren,  
And an alien to my mother's sons.
- 9 For zeal for thine house hath consumed me,  
And the reproaches of them that reproach thee have  
fallen upon me.

cally; "Thou *wouldest* know," etc., i.e. if I were really guilty. Ewald takes *foolishness* here to mean the *consequences* of folly and sin, i.e. the punishment of them, and renders, "Thou knowest my punishment, and my sufferings are not hid," etc. And Hupfeld inclines to the same view. But all such interpretations are far-fetched. We have here, as in xl. 12 [13], a confession of sinfulness, a confession that that sinfulness has brought upon him the punishment from which he now suffers. With this confession he turns to God, who knows him far better than he knows himself. "God, *thou* knowest." He does not attempt to assert that he is innocent, but only that his enemies are unjust and malicious in their attacks. And then he urges his appeal for mercy on the ground that others who trust in God will be put to shame, if his servant is left to perish.

7. FOR THY SAKE. Another reason urged why God should rescue him from his enemies. It is true he is a sinner; it is true he suffers for his sin; nevertheless the men who have injured him have injured him unjustly. It is Jehovah himself, and the people of Jehovah (see last verse), who are reproached in him; it is Jehovah's honor and the honor of his house and worship which are at stake. See note on xlv. 17-22. The complaint is very similar to the one made in xlv. 13 [14], etc. Compare particularly the expressions, "for thy

sake," "confusion hath covered my face," "I became a proverb," the only difference being that there they are spoken of the nation, here of the individual. An exact parallel is to be found in Jer. xv. 15, "know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke."

8. Even his own nearest of kin are estranged from him on this account. Comp. the similar complaints, xxvii. 10; xxxi. 11 [12]; xxxviii. 11 [12].

9. ZEAL FOR THINE HOUSE. Perhaps, for the state of neglect in which it was, or for the profanation of the sanctuary, though the phrase *may* only mean zeal for God's service and worship. (So Hupfeld.) Still, I think, this expression is only to be accounted for on the supposition that the Temple was standing.

HATH CONSUMED; lit. "eaten." cf. cxix. 139. Similar expressions with respect to the prophets will be found, Jer. vi. 11; xv. 17; xx. 9; xxiii. 9; Ezek. iii. 14. This, which was true in various imperfect degrees of these servants of God of old, was in a far higher sense true of the only-begotten Son, who could say, I seek not mine own glory. Hence, when he purged the Temple, the disciples could not help thinking of these words of the Psalm, as finding their best application in him (John ii. 17).

UPON ME, as upon all God's true prophets (comp. Jer. i. 6-8; Ezek. ii. 6. 7), and above all upon the Great Prophet

- 10 And I wept my soul (away) in fasting,<sup>d</sup>  
 And it became (a subject of) reproaches for me.
- 11 I made sackcloth also my clothing  
 And I became to them a proverb :
- 12 They that sit in the gate talk of me,<sup>e</sup>  
 And the songs of them that drink strong drink (are  
 concerning me).
- 13 But as for me — my prayer is unto thee, O Jehovah !  
 In an acceptable time,<sup>f</sup> O God, in the greatness of thy  
 loving-kindness :
- Answer me with the truth of thy salvation.
- 14 Deliver me from (the) mire, that I sink not ;  
 Let me be rescued from my haters, and from the depths  
 of the waters.

of the church, as St. Paul reminds us, quoting these words (Rom. xv. 3).

10. IN FASTING (on the construction see Critical Note), and in the next verse SACKCLOTH, symbols of deep sorrow, and of repentance. Comp. xxxv. 13. But it has been disputed whether they denote, (1) humiliation for his own sin, and outward tokens of his suffering; or (2) sorrow for the despite done to God's honor and house; or (3) whether the Psalmist appears here in a representative character, sorrowing for the sins of his people, shedding tears for those who had no tears to shed for themselves, fasting for those who were living in pleasure in the earth and were wanton, putting sackcloth on his loins for those who saw not the judgments of God. It is most probable, I think, that a public expression of sorrow is meant, and that this was called forth by the general neglect of religion (ver. 9); and then this public protest against ungodliness was turned into ridicule by those against whom it was directed (ver. 11, 12).

12. IN THE GATE, as the place of public resort. See note on ix. 14 [15].

TALK OF ME. The verb is used in poetry, and may mean here either to converse generally, or to sing songs, as in cv. 2; cxlv. 5.

AND THE SONGS, etc. . . . ARE CONCERNING ME; lit. "And I am (the subject of the) songs," etc. Comp. the use of the singular in Job xxx. 9; Lam. iii. 14, 63; Ezek. xxxiii. 32. In every boisterous company of drunkards he is the butt of their unholy merriment.

13. BUT AS FOR ME. The pronoun, as usual, emphatic; in order to mark the contrast between his own conduct and that of such men; and a nominative absolute as in xxxv. 13; Gen. xvii. 4.

IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME; lit. "in a time of good pleasure." The same expression occurs in Isa. xlix. 8. Comp. Ps. xxxii. 6. The right distribution of the clauses of this verse is doubtful. The arrangement I have adopted is that of Hupfeld and Bunsen. Ewald joins the words "in an acceptable time," etc. with what follows. Delitzsch, on the other hand, makes the first clause of the verse end with these words, and begins the second, "O God, in the greatness," etc.

14. This and the next verse answer to verses 1, 2, almost the same expressions being employed, there in describing the lamentable condition of the Psalmist, here in pleading for deliverance from that condition.

- 15 Let not a flood of waters overflow me,  
 Neither let (the) abyss swallow me up,  
 And let not (the) pit shut her mouth upon me.
- 16 Answer me, O Jehovah, for thy loving-kindness is good ;  
 According to the greatness of thy tender mercies turn  
 unto me ;
- 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant,  
 For I am in distress ; speedily answer me.
- 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, ransom it ;  
 Because of mine enemies, redeem me.
- 19 THOU knowest my reproach, and my shame, and my confusion ;  
 Before thee are all my adversaries.
- 20 Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness,<sup>s</sup>  
 And I waited for sympathy, and there was none ;  
 And for comforters, and have not found (them).

15. THE PIT. The Hebrew word (בֵּאֵר *B'er*) is commonly rendered in the E.V. "well," but here and lv. 23 [24], and Prov. xxiii. 27, rightly, "pit" (= Heb. בּוֹר *Bôr*). It means properly, (see App. to Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 512,) "a dug pit, usually with water at the bottom" (except Gen. xiv. 10, where it is used of the natural pits of bitumen). These wells, as is evident from numerous vestiges of them still remaining, had "a broad margin of masonry round the mouth, and often a stone filling up the orifice." This explains the prayer, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me," Such a person would have been buried alive.

16. GOOD, i.e. either *sweet, comforting*, as in lxiii. 3 [4], or *gracious*, χρηστός. Comp. cix. 21. This appeal to God's tender mercy, remarks Calvin, "shows how great was the strait of the holy prophet . . . and of a truth it is a very difficult matter to be sure that God is gracious while he is angry, and near while he is far off."

19. The second principal division of the Psalm opens with a renewed appeal to God. Comp. verse 5 and verse 13. There is a repetition of what had been

said already (ver. 4, 7, 9, etc.), together with the additional aggravation mentioned in verse 21.

THOU KNOWEST. In the certainty that all his sorrows, fears, sicknesses, reproach, sufferings, are known to God, the Psalmist again finds his consolation.

20. FULL OF HEAVINESS, or "sick," or "faint." Perhaps here used in reference to the mind rather than the body. The word does not occur in this form elsewhere, but we have the cognate root, Jer. xv. 18 ; xvii. 16, and in other passages.

SYMPATHY. This is the only place in the Psalter where the word is found. Properly speaking it is not a noun, but a verb in the infinitive. Hence the periphrasis in the E.V. "I looked for some to take pity," or, as in the marg., "to lament with." The word *sympathy* has nowhere been employed by our translators, but it exactly conveys the force of the Hebrew word, inasmuch as it is used of sympathy in joy as well as in sorrow ; see Job xlii. 11, where our version renders "and they bemoaned him" ; "and they sympathized with him" would have been better. They would not *bemoan* him on his restoration

21 And they gave me gall for my food,  
And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

to health and prosperity. This word also is used several times by Jeremiah, xv. 5; xvi. 5; xlviii. 17.

21. THEY GAVE ME FOR MY FOOD. I have adopted this rendering because it seems best to accord with the parallelism in the next verse; the preposition  $\pi$  is the so-called *Beth essentialis*, and introduces the predicate. And so the E.V. has understood the construction: "for my meat," and the Prayer-book version "to eat," following Luther, "zu essen." According to the usual construction of the verb with the preposition the rendering would be, "they put gall into my food"; and so Ewald and Delitzsch take it, and the older versions generally. The word translated FOOD occurs only here, but see the kindred form, 2 Sam. xiii. 5, 7, 10.

GALL. What is the exact meaning of the word (Hebrew  $\text{רֹשֶׁה}$ , *rosh*) it is difficult to say. Both Symm. and the LXX have *χολή*, and Jerome, *fel*; the Syr. *bitternesses, bitter things*. According to Hosea x. 4, it is a plant "growing in the furrows of the field," and there the E.V. renders it by "hemlock." In Deut. xxix. 17 [E.V. 18]; Lam. iii. 19, it is joined with "wormwood." Gesen. referring to Deut. xxxii. 32, supposes some berry-bearing plant to be meant, and conjectures that it may be "the poppy." And this Mr. Houghton (Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, App. GALL) thinks most probable, where all is uncertain. Hengstenberg suggests it may mean only "something very bitter," and not of necessity any particular root or plant.

WHEN I WAS THIRSTY; lit. "for my thirst."

VINEGAR, or "sour wine"; the Greek translators, *ἄξος*, and the Latin, *acetum*. St. Matthew, who never forgets the foreshadowings of the Old Testament, alludes, there can be no doubt, to this verse of the Psalm, when he mentions, in his narrative of the crucifixion (xxvii. 34), that the Roman soldiers offered our

Lord "vinegar mingled with gall" (*ἄξος [οἶνον] μετὰ χολῆς μειγμένον*), just before he was nailed to the cross. St. Mark, on the other hand, in his narrative (xv. 23) speaks of "wine mingled with myrrh" (*οἶνος ἐσμυρνισμένος*). Dean Alford, in his note on the former passage, seems to think that the two potions could not be the same, though he admits that *οἶνος* might mean the same as *ἄξος*, *sour wine*. But Mr. Houghton has observed (in the article before referred to) that "the wine mingled with myrrh" "was probably a mere ordinary beverage of the Romans, who were in the habit of seasoning their various wines, which, as they contained little alcohol, soon turned sour, with various spices, drugs, etc." and if so, then the *same* potion may be described by St. Matthew, and the words "with gall" may either denote generally the bitter nature of the draught, or some bitter substance may have been purposely added by way of mockery. It has been usually assumed that this drink was given to criminals to stupefy, and deaden pain; but it does not seem that myrrh has any of the properties of an anodyne. If, however, St. Matthew and St. Mark admit of such reconciliation (though were no reconciliation possible it need not startle us), the allusion to this Psalm in St. John presents another difficulty. This evangelist (xix. 28) tells us that Jesus, in order that the Scripture might be accomplished, said, "I thirst." But this was not before our Lord was crucified, but at the last, only just before he gave up the ghost. It is clear, therefore, that he and St. Matthew, though both acknowledging a fulfilment of the Psalm in our Lord's crucifixion, associate that fulfilment with two different circumstances. But we are not, therefore, compelled to conclude, as Hupfeld does, that there is no fulfilment at all. The Psalm is truly typical, and its *whole meaning* is exhausted not in the one circumstance only, but in both.



- 22 Let their table before them become a snare,  
 And when they are in peace (let it be) a trap.  
 23 Let their eyes be darkened that they see not,  
 And make their loins constantly to shake.  
 24 Pour out upon them thine indignation,  
 And let the burning of thine anger overtake them.

22. The imprecations which follow can only be perplexing to those who, having adopted a hard mechanical theory of prophecy, feel themselves compelled to understand every part of the Psalm as equally predictive of our Lord; or to those who persistently refuse to acknowledge the difference between the Old Testament and the New. If we go on the broad ground of a typical foreshadowing of Christ in the person of some saint of old, then we shall not be obliged to assume that *all* his words are words such as our Lord could use. And if we remember what our Lord himself has taught us, that the spirit of Elijah—the greatest of the Old Testament prophets—is very different from the spirit of Christ, then we shall not be offended at language in the mouth of a saint under the old dispensation which we do not find sanctioned under the New. See more on this subject in the note on xxxv. 22.

THEIR TABLE, said with reference to verse 21. They had given him gall and vinegar for his food; let their food, their table, with all its sumptuousness and all its luxury, become a snare to take them. It has been spread for their enjoyment; let it turn to their destruction. Comp. xxiii. 5. Or perhaps the meaning may be: Let them be like persons who while sitting at their meals “in peace,” in security, unarmed, and unsuspecting, are suddenly surprised by their enemies. Their “table becomes a snare,” as exposing them to certain destruction.

WHEN THEY ARE IN PEACE; lit. “to (them) in peace, or in security.” It denotes that kind of security which is the very gate of destruction. Comp.

1 Thess. v. 3. The LXX render the second clause of the verse *καὶ εἰς ἀνταπόδοσιν* (as if they read in their text *לְשִׁלּוּם*), “for retributions”), *καὶ εἰς σκάνδαλον*. Jerome, “in retributione eorum ad corruendum.” Indeed all the older versions give a similar interpretation. Rashi takes the word (*sh’lomim*), which is an adjective, as the plural of the noun used for the singular, and renders “when they look for peace”; and so Calvin, who, however, supposes an omission of the relative: “Quae ad pacem sunt (pacifica eorum), ut quaecunque illis in vitam et prosperam commoditatem destinata erunt, Deus convertat in exitium.” He has been followed by the E.V., “And that which should have been for their welfare.” The apostle, citing this passage in Rom. xi. 9 (*εἰς παγίδα, καὶ εἰς θήραν, καὶ εἰς σκάνδαλον, καὶ εἰς ἀνταπόδομα αὐτοῖς*), follows neither the Hebrew nor the LXX, but either quotes from memory or gives a free rendering of his own. His application of the words is also remarkable, for he quotes them in illustration of his position that a judicial blindness has fallen upon the nation of Israel at large, from which only “the elect” had been exempted. To discuss the principle of this illustration, would be to discuss the whole question of citations in the New Testament from the Old—a subject much too large to be satisfactorily investigated in a note.

23. The darkening of the eyes denotes weakness and perplexity, as the enlightening of the eyes (see on xix. 8) denotes renewed vigor and strength. Similarly, the shaking of the loins is expressive of terror and dismay and feebleness (Nah. ii. 10 [11]; Dan. v. 6).

- 25 Let their encampment be desolate,  
 In their tents let there be no dweller.  
 26 For him whom THOU hast smitten have they persecuted,  
 And of the pain of thy wounded ones do they tell.  
 27 Add iniquity to their iniquity,  
 And let them not come into thy righteousness.  
 28 Let them be blotted out from the book of life,  
 And with (the) righteous let them not be written.

Or the first may mean the depriving of reason and understanding; the second, the taking away of all strength for action.

25. THEIR ENCAMPMENT. LXX, *ἐπαυλις*. Prop. "the movable village of nomadic tribes," who usually pitch their tents in a circle. See Gen. xxv. 16, where *tērah* is joined with *chātsār*, the former being the movable and the latter the stationary village, as Tuch (*in loc.*) rightly explains. The expression is, of course, used here figuratively, in accordance with "tents" in the parallelism.

26. The reason for the imprecation is given, because of the un pitying cruelty which delighted in adding to the pain and affliction of one whom God had already brought low. His very suffering might have moved them to compassion. Comp. Job xix. 21, 22. The plural in the second clause of the verse, THY WOUNDED ONES (comp. Isa. lxvi. 16; Jer. xxv. 33), passes from the individual instance to the general conduct of these men, but implies at the same time that there are some few others exposed to the like treatment with himself.

DO THEY TELL, as if they counted one by one every blow that fell upon him, every cry that he had uttered, only to turn it into mockery (comp. lix. 12 [13]; lxiv. 5 [6]). The verb is followed here by the preposition (לְ) as in ii. 7; it is the aorist (fut.) of repeated action.

27. ADD INIQUITY, etc., i.e. let it all stand against them in thy book; one sin after another, as committed, not being blotted out, but only swelling the

fearful reckoning. Comp. Jer. xviii. 23. This swelling of the catalogue of guilt is in fact swelling the punishment, but there is no need to render (as French and Skinner do), "Give them punishment upon punishment."

COME INTO, i.e. "be partakers of" (as Ezek. xvi. 7).

THY RIGHTEOUSNESS, that righteousness which God gives, and which alone is accepted in his sight.

28. BOOK OF LIFE, or "of the living" (as the LXX, Luther, Calvin, the E.V.), called in Ex. xxxii. 32, "the book of God." Comp. Isa. iv. 3; Dan. xii. 1. See also Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8. The figure is borrowed from the civil lists or register in which the names of citizens were enrolled (Jer. xxii. 32; Ezek. xiii. 9). To be blotted out of this denotes exclusion from all the blessings and privileges of the theocracy, and therefore from all hope of salvation, as is evident from the next clause: "let them not be written with the righteous"; the righteous being the true Israelites, as in Hab. ii. 4. This is the most terrible imprecation of all, though but the necessary consequence of that obstinate impenitence before supposed. Calvin, who supposes God's eternal counsel of salvation to be meant by the *book of life*, is obliged to explain away the obvious meaning of the words, and argues that, inasmuch as God's purpose cannot be changed, the expression is merely adapted to human notions. They, he says, who have once been written in that book cannot be really blotted out; but because God's counsel is secret to us,

- 29 But as for me — (I am) afflicted and in pain :  
 Thy salvation, O God, shall set me up on high.
- 30 Let me praise the name of God with a song,  
 And magnify it with thanksgiving.
- 31 And it shall please Jehovah better than an ox,  
 (Than) a bullock with horns (and) hoofs.
- 32 (When) the afflicted have seen (it), they shall rejoice :  
 Ye that seek God, — let your heart live.
- 33 For Jehovah hearkeneth to (the) poor,  
 And his prisoners he hath not despised.
- 34 Let heaven and earth praise him,  
 The seas and all that swarmeth therein.
- 35 For God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah,  
 And (men) shall dwell there, and possess it.

those may be said to be “blotted out of his book” whom he *openly* excludes from his church. It is this open rejection therefore which is here meant, and the expression is equivalent to saying: “Do not reckon them in the number of thy people, neither let them be gathered with thy church.” To such straits is the ablest of commentators driven, when he has resigned himself to the fetters of an inexorable logic.

29. The Psalm closes with joyful hopes and vows of thanksgiving for God’s mercy, in this respect resembling Psalm xxii. In this joy and thanksgiving all other righteous sufferers shall share. And finally Zion and the cities of Judah shall be rebuilt, amid the universal jubilee of all creation.

BUT AS FOR ME, placing himself emphatically in contrast to those who had been the object of his imprecation.

31. WITH HORNS (AND) HOOFS; lit. “showing horns, showing hoofs.” The epithets are not merely otiose, as Hupfeld asserts. The first is mentioned in order to mark that the animal was not under three years old, and therefore of the proper age according to the law; the last as intimating that it belonged to the class of clean four-footed animals,

parting the hoof (Lev. xi.); and the meaning is, that the most perfect and valuable of the sacrifices ordained by the law was not to be compared to the sacrifice of a grateful heart. See notes on l., li.

32. LET YOUR HEART LIVE. Comp. the same expression xxii. 26 [27].

33. This joyful certainty of his own deliverance, this joyful hope that others afflicted like himself will rejoice together with him, rests upon the known character of God, upon the universal experience of his goodness.

HIS PRISONERS, i.e. those of his people who have been led into captivity in Babylon.

34. In remembrance of this he calls upon the universe to praise God.

35. The conclusion of the Psalm is not unlike Isa. lxx. 9. If the Psalm was written, as seems not improbable, by Jeremiah, there is no reason why these verses may not have formed part of the original text. Indeed, there is but little pretence for regarding them as a later liturgical addition, made at the time of the Exile. They are not so easily separable from the context as the close of Ps. xiv., for instance, or that of li. This Delitzsch himself admits. Yet

36 And the seed of his servants shall inherit it,  
And they that love his name shall abide therein.

for those who maintain that David was the author this is the only tenable ground. Such words could have no meaning in David's mouth.

<sup>a</sup> עַל שֵׁנוֹ. See on xlv. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> מַצְמִיתִי. Hupfeld objects to the word because it means properly "my *destroyers*," whereas here it can only mean "my *adversaries*." He observes that the Syr., probably feeling the difficulty, must have changed it into מִנְצָמִיתִי, as they render "more than my bones"; and some sort of comparison, he argues, is required by the parallelism and indicated by the verb נִצַּמְתִּי, which in the similar passage, xl. 13, is also followed by מִן expressing a comparison. [Riehm adds (2d ed.), "cf. however Lam. iii. 53."] Hare (who is followed by Lowth and Merrick) conjectures מַצְמִיתִי, "more than the *locks of my hair*"; but צִמָּה means not a *lock of hair*, but a *veil*. Hupfeld himself conjectures מַצְמִיתִי from צִמְרֶת, a *fleece*, used also of the *foliage* of trees, but he confesses there is no proof that it was ever used of human hair. None of these conjectures is satisfactory.

<sup>c</sup> לֹאֲנִלָּתִי. This construction of the prep. לִ with the verb יָרַע occurs nowhere else, but we find it in the case of similar verbs, such as בִּין, to *consider*, זָכַר, to *remember*, etc

<sup>d</sup> בַּצּוֹם נַפְשִׁי. It is impossible to translate this, as the Chald. and others do, "in the fasting of my soul," because the first noun has the art., and therefore is not in the stat. constr. Either, therefore, נַפְשִׁי is a second nominative: "I, i.e. my soul, wept in fasting" (comp. iii. 4 [5], "my voice, I cry," Jer. xiii. 17), or perhaps a remote object of the action of the verb with a pregnant construction. So Mendels. and Delitzsch, "Ich verwein', im Fasten, meine Seele." Ewald regards נַפְשִׁי as simply subordinated to the verb (not, as Phillips says, as having a pronominal sense), and renders, "da weinte ich tief, fastend," i.e. I wept in my very soul. The LXX, καὶ συνέκαμψα ἐν νηστεία τῇ ψυχῇ μου, in accordance with which Hupfeld would read נַפְשִׁי instead of נַפְשִׁי, "and I *afflicted* my soul with fasting," which there can be no doubt is the usual expression.

<sup>e</sup> קְשִׁירוֹ. The word is a poetical one and expresses almost any kind of utterance, whether of speech or song, whether sad (as in lv. 3) or merry, and even sarcastic as here. It is construed with the accusative in Prov. vi. 22. The construction of the second clause of the verse has been differently explained. The simplest way seems to repeat this



verb, making נְגִינֹת its subject: "the songs of the drunkards talk of me"; but according to the analogy of Job xxx. 9; Lam. iii. 14, we should rather supply הִירִיחִי, or הִירִיחִי, or simply the pronoun אֲנִי, as in Lam. iii. 63, "And I am (the subject of) the songs," etc. (the plural as lxxiii. 22).

<sup>f</sup> עֵת רָצוֹן. This is simply the accusative of time. There is no ellipse of בָּ as Phillips says. Hengstenberg still more strangely denies that עֵת is ever used as an accusative of time, and therefore renders, contrary to the accents, and to the destruction of all rhythm and even tolerable sense, "But I pray to thee, O Jehovah! A time of favor, O God, through the abundance of thy mercy!" But even if no other instance of this use of עֵת could be alleged, it might be amply defended by the use of analogous words like יוֹם, לַיְלָה, etc. We have, however, this very usage in Jer. li. 33; Ezek. xxvii. 34.

<sup>g</sup> אָנִישָׁה, future Kal of נִישׁ, which occurs only here, cognate with אָנֶשׁ. Lee, however (Gram. § 189 *b*), would make it future of אָנֶשׁ for אָנִישָׁה, and would explain the form with *Shurek* by such instances as רִשְׁפוּתִי, Ex. xviii. 26; הִשְׁמִיר, Prov. xiv. 3.

## PSALM LXX.

THIS Psalm is a repetition, with some variations, of the last five verses of Psalm xl. Besides the difference in the use of the divine names, there are some other divergences which will be found discussed in the Critical Notes. I see no reason to abandon the opinion which I have expressed in the note on xl. 13, that this Psalm formed originally a part of Psalm xl., and was subsequently detached and altered for a special occasion.

[For the Precentor. (A Psalm) of David. To bring to Remembrance.\*]

1 O God, (make haste) to deliver me ;<sup>b</sup>

O Jehovah, to help me make haste.

2 Let them be ashamed and put to the blush

That seek after my soul ;

1. O GOD, instead of O Jehovah (xl. 13 [14], and the verb BE PLEASED, omitted here, which is expressed there.

TO HELP ME ; lit. "to my help."

2. PUT TO THE BLUSH : in xl. 14 [15] there is added, TOGETHER, and at the end of the next member of the verse, TO DESTROY IT.

Let them be turned backward and put to confusion  
That wish me evil.

3 Let them return<sup>c</sup> as a reward of their shame,  
Who say, Aha! Aha!

4 Let all those that seek thee be glad and rejoice in thee,  
And let them that love thy salvation say alway,  
“God be magnified.”

5 And as for me, afflicted and poor,  
O God, make haste unto me!<sup>d</sup>  
My help and my deliverer art thou;  
O Jehovah, make no long tarrying!

PUT TO CONFUSION. The word should have been so rendered in xl. 14 [15].

THAT WISH ME EVIL; lit. “that delight in my evil, i.e. my misfortune.”

3. LET THEM RETURN. In xl. 15 [16] we have the far stronger expression, LET THEM BE STRUCK DUMB, i.e. with amazement. See more in Critical Note.

AS A REWARD OF THEIR SHAME; lit. “upon the heel of their shame,” and

hence “as a consequence, retribution,” etc., and as a prep. simply “on account of.”

4. GOD (*Elohim*), in xl. 16 [17] Jehovah.

5. O GOD, MAKE HASTE UNTO ME! For this, we have in xl. 17 [18], “the Lord thinketh upon me” (*Adonai* instead of *Elohim*); and afterwards “O my God,” instead of “O Jehovah.”

<sup>a</sup> לְהִזְקִיר. On this title, see Ps. xxxviii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> לְהִצְלִינִי. This must depend here on הוֹשִׁיעַ in the second clause of the verse (a construction of which, according to Delitzsch, there is no other example in the Psalter); unless, indeed, we take the infinitive with לְ to be used for the future (see xlix. note <sup>k</sup>). On the other hand, in xl. 13 [14], the infinitive depends on רָצָה. This, again, is an unusual construction, as רָצָה elsewhere occurs only with the accusative or בָּ, once with עִם and always in the sense *to take pleasure in*, not, as here, *to be pleased*.

<sup>c</sup> יָשׁוּבוּ. Hupfeld, who argues for Ps. lxx. as the original, finds this reading preferable to the much more forcible יָשׁוּמוּ, in xl. 15 [16]. He alleges that it is more in accordance with the context and with analogy, and refers to the similar expression in ver. 2 (xl. 15), “let them be *turned backward*.” But the only passage which he can quote in defence of such a meaning for the verb שׁוּב is vi. 11. I have myself so rendered יָשׁוּבוּ there, “let them be turned backward,” where it certainly stands in a very similar connection with בּוֹשׁ; but after carefully examining the various uses of the verb שׁוּב, I am persuaded it cannot

mean *to be turned back*, but only *to return*. “Let them return,” i.e. *re infecta*; but it is obvious that here this is a comparatively weak expression, and it seems to me that the person who detached this portion of Ps. xl. and slightly altered it, may very probably have borrowed this form of expression from vi. 11.

<sup>d</sup> אֶל־הִים חוֹשֵׁב־לִי (comp. cxli. 1), for which, in the other version, we have אֶל־נִי יַחֲשֹׁב־לִי, “*The Lord thinketh of me*,” i.e. *careth for me*. So the LXX, *φροντίζει μου*, and Jerome, *solicitus erit pro me*, understood it. Hupfeld objects that the passages which Gesen. quotes, Isa. xiii. 17; xxxiii. 8; liii. 3, in support of this meaning of חֹשֵׁב, are not in point, because in every one of them the negative precedes, and לֹא עָשָׂה means  *nihili facere* ; but he omits to notice that Gesen. also quotes Mal. iii. 16, לֹא־חֲשַׁב־שְׁמוֹ, “those who *think upon*, or *regard*, his name,” where we have the meaning required here, the only difference being that there the verb is followed by the accusative and here by the preposition לִי.

## PSALM LXXI.

THIS Psalm is without any inscription in the Hebrew. In the LXX its title is “(a Psalm) of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first led captive”; a curiously composite title, which contains a contradiction in itself. It may, however, have been intended to denote that, in the opinion of the translators, the Psalm was Davidic in origin, and, at the same time, to record the tradition that it was a favorite Psalm with the Rechabites, and the earlier exiles.

On two points, only, do we gather any certain information from the Psalm itself. First, it is evident that it was written by one already past the meridian of life, and verging upon old age. And, secondly, it borrows so largely from other Psalms,—the twenty-second, thirty-first, thirty-fifth, and fortieth, some of them, probably, Psalms written long after the time of David,—that it must be regarded as one of the later specimens of Hebrew poetry.

Other evidence of an internal kind renders it not improbable that the Psalm was written by Jeremiah. It would apply obviously to his circumstances. His life had been a life of extraordinary perils and extraordinary deliverances. He had been consecrated from his birth, and even before his birth, to his office (Jer. i. 5, compared with verse 6 of the Psalm). He had discharged that office for more than thirty years, and might, therefore, be verging on old age in the reign of Zede-

kiah. The prominent position which he occupied for so long a period before princes and people harmonizes well with the language of the Psalm in verses 7 and 21. Finally, the style and general character of the poetry are not unlike those of Jeremiah. There is the same plaintive elegiac strain which we find in his writings, and the same disposition to borrow from earlier poets.

All this falls in very well with the tradition which has been preserved by the LXX. A Psalm written by Jeremiah would very naturally have a peculiar value in the eyes of the Rechabites whom the prophet mentions so honorably, and in the eyes of the first exiles who had so often listened to the words of his lips. In the allusion to national troubles in verse 20, Ewald finds evidence that the Psalm belongs to the times of the Exile. But the language there is too vague to be conclusive.

The Psalm can hardly be said to have any regular strophical form.

It has first an introduction (ver. 1-3).

Then follow two main divisions. The first of these tells the story of *the past*, recounts God's goodness and the Psalmist's trust, and concludes with a prayer for the overthrow of his enemies (ver. 4-13).

The next looks forward to *the future*, anticipates deliverance, promises thanksgiving, and sees the prayer for the overthrow of his enemies answered (ver. 14-24).

Verses 13 and 24 correspond to one another almost in the manner of a refrain.

- 1 In thee, O Jehovah, have I found refuge,  
Let me not be ashamed forever.
- 2 In thy righteousness deliver me and rescue me;  
Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.
- 3 Be thou to me a rock of habitation,<sup>a</sup> (to which) I may  
always come;  
Thou hast given commandment to save me;  
For thou art my rock and my fortress.

1-3. The opening of the Psalm is borrowed, with slight verbal alterations, from the opening of xxxi.

3. (TO WHICH) I MAY ALWAYS COME, i.e. where I may always find safety when danger threatens.

THOU HAST GIVEN COMMANDMENT.

This might be rendered as a relative clause: "Thou who hast," etc.; but it certainly cannot be rendered as an imperative, "Give commandment." Nor is it necessary to suppose that the command is given to the angels; for, as Calvin long ago observed, God has in-



- I. 4 O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked,  
 From the grasp of the evil-doer and the violent.  
 5 For THOU, O Lord, Jehovah! art my hope,  
 Thou art my trust from my youth up.  
 6 Upon thee have I been holden up from the womb,  
 From my mother's bowels thou art my benefactor,<sup>b</sup>  
 Of thee is my praise always.  
 7 I have become as a wonder unto many,  
 But thou art my strong refuge.<sup>c</sup>

numerable means of imparting help and protection, and he may be said to command deliverance when he shows it in some open and signal manner: "Quoties favorem suum palam exerit aliquo signo, et nunc solo nutu, nunc per homines vel alias creaturas exequitur, quod apud se statuit." Comp. xlv. 4 [5]; lxviii. 28 [29].

ROCK (Hebrew *Sela'*). Not the same word as that used before (which is *tsur*), but apparently the two words are used without any difference of meaning.

5. MY HOPE. Comp. Jer. xvii. 13, where God is called "the Hope of Israel." So in the New Testament Christ is called ἡ ἐλπίς ἡμῶν (1 Tim. i. 1).

6. HAVE I BEEN HOLDEN UP (in the passage which has here been imitated, xxii. 10 [11], "I have been cast"), an expression wonderfully descriptive of what faith is, and of what God is to those who trust in him. He is a Father who bears them in his arms and carries them in his bosom; they are as children who lean all their weight upon him, and find their sweetest rest in his supporting hand. This is the very idea of faith, according to its Hebrew signification. When it is said in Gen. xv. 6, that "Abraham believed God," it means literally, "*he leaned upon God*" (though the root there is different, it is the same which in the Kal conjugation means to *bear* or *carry* a *child*, Num. xi. 12, and in Isa. xlix. 23 is used of a *nursing father*). But the Psalmist speaks here, not mainly of his own trust in God, but rather of his experience of God's loving care and protection.

MY BENEFACTOR (See Critical Note). Calvin, who renders "a visceribus matris meae tu extractor meus," sees here a reference to God's goodness even *before* his birth, and has some admirable remarks on our forgetfulness of God's wonders to us both before and at our birth. In the mouth of Jeremiah, if, as we have conjectured, the Psalm was written by him, such words have a peculiar interest, for they refer, no doubt, to that word of Jehovah which came unto him saying, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth from the womb I sanctified thee" (Jer. i. 5).

OF THEE; lit. "*in thee*," God being the great object of his praise, and the construction being the same as that with the verb in xlv. 8 [9], where see note <sup>b</sup>.

7. A WONDER. Commentators are divided in their interpretation of the word. Some understand it in a good sense, "a marvel of God's protecting care and love, which had been vouchsafed to him even in the extremest perils." (So Gesen., DeWette.) Others suppose him to mean, that because of the greatness of the sufferings and calamities which had befallen him, he had been, as it were, a portent, a prodigy. So Calvin: "Quod propter urgentes miseras quibus opprimebatur, passim fuerit detestabilis. . . . *Portenti* vero nomine, non vulgaris calamitas exprimitur." But perhaps it is better, with Delitzsch, to understand it as applying to his whole wonderful life of trials and blessings, of perils and deliverances, such as did

8 My mouth is filled with thy praise,  
With thine honor all the day long.

9 Cast me not away in the time of old age,  
When my strength faileth forsake me not.

10 For mine enemies have said of me —  
And they that watch for my soul have taken counsel  
together,

11 Saying : — God hath forsaken him,  
Pursue and seize him, for there is none to deliver.

12 O God, be not far from me ;  
O my God, haste thee to help me !

13 Let them be ashamed, let them be consumed,  
That withstand my soul ;  
Let them be covered with reproach and confusion  
That seek my hurt.

II. 14 But as for me — I will alway hope,  
And will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall tell of thy righteousness,  
(And) of thy salvation all the day ;  
For I know no numbers (thereof).

not ordinarily fall to the lot of man. It is implied, at the same time, that his life was a public life, such as that of a prophet, or leading man amongst his people, or it would not have attracted the notice and excited the wonder of "many."

8. IS FILLED. It is, I think, best to take the verb here as a present, describing the immediate and natural consequence of all that care and love which in the previous verses he had celebrated.

9. This review of the past leads him to look forward to the future, and especially to the season of old age, which already, it would seem, was creeping upon him.

10. HAVE SAID OF ME. The preposition may be so rendered: "with respect to me"; or simply "to me"; as, "to my soul," (iii. 2 [3], where see note). *What* they say is given in verse 11, the intervening words being parenthetical. The repetition of the verb at the beginning

of the next verse, SAYING, is unnecessary, as Delitzsch remarks, and a sign of later age. Comp. cv. 11; cxix. 82. In the first edition of his Commentary he connected the preposition לִי, "of me," or "to me," not with the verb, but with the noun immediately preceding: lit. "mine enemies to me," the pronoun being repeated pleonastically, as in xxv. 2; xxvii. 2.

HAVE TAKEN COUNSEL TOGETHER, as lxxxiii. 3 [4], 5 [6]. Comp. ii. 2.

12. This and the next verse are composed of phrases borrowed from other Psalms, (xxii. 11 [12], 19 [20]; xxxviii. 21, 22 [22, 23]; xl. 13 [14].

13. MY HURT; lit. "my evil," as in lxx. 2.

14. AND WILL YET PRAISE, etc.; lit. "And will add to all thy praise"; but I have preferred adopting the more idiomatic rendering of the E.V.

15. RIGHTEOUSNESS. The word

- 16 I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jehovah ;  
 I will make mention of thy righteousness, (even) of  
 thine only.
- 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth ;  
 And hitherto do I declare thy wondrous works.
- 18 Yea also to old age and hoary hairs, O God, forsake  
 me not,

(צַדִּיקָהּ) has, most unfortunately, been rendered here and in the next verse, by French and Skinner, "mercy," to the grievous marring of the whole passage. It never means anything but *righteousness*, least of all when spoken of God. It is true that Gesen. gives the meaning *benignitas, misericordia* in xxiv. 5; Prov. xi. 4, and *liberalitas* in Prov. x. 2; Micah vi. 5, but it is quite unnecessary in any of these passages to depart from the usual signification. In his smaller Lexicon he gives *deliverance, prosperity*, as its equivalent (in the Thesaurus he has *salus*) in a multitude of passages in Isaiah, where it occurs, as here, parallel with *salvation* (יְשׁוּעָה), and again classes Ps. xxiv. 5 (where *righteousness* answers to *blessing* in the parallelism) under this head. But it would be the merest tautology to render the word *salus, salvation*, in many of the passages cited. Isa. xlv. 8; xlv. 13 [xlvi. 18, *peace* in the parallelism]; li. 6, 8 [lv. 17]; lvi. 1 [lvii. 12, "*Thy works*" in the parallelism]; lix. [9], 17; lxi. 10, 11. In all the references not enclosed in brackets we have *salvation* as the parallel to *righteousness*, and therefore it is obvious the one word does not stand for the other. Still less can the word *righteousness* mean only *temporal prosperity*. This miserable mistake on the part of Gesenius is due to his not perceiving the real theological relation between the two. God's salvation stands to his righteousness in the relation of effect to cause. God has pledged himself to save those who put their trust in him, and as a righteous God he cannot deny himself. This seems to be the connection between the two words in this Psalm. In Isaiah, *righteousness* is regarded, not

merely as an attribute of God, but as imparted to man (almost in the sense of justification), and so, in fact, constituting his true salvation.

NO NUMBERS (the Hebrew word occurs only here). God's righteousness and God's salvation are infinitely beyond all man's power to calculate or to repeat. Comp. xl. 5 [6]; cxxxix. 17.

16. I WILL COME WITH, etc, i.e. "I will come (into the Temple, probably, comp. lxvi. 13) with all the great and mighty deeds which God has done on my behalf as my subject of grateful praise." That this is the meaning is plain from the parallelism in the next clause. The renderings of French and Skinner, "I will dwell upon the mighty deeds," etc., and of Phillips, "I will go forth in the strength," etc., are both grammatically indefensible. The verb never means *to go forth*, but always *to go in*, or simply *to come*.

OF THINE ONLY; lit. "of thee alone."

17. AND HITHERTO. The Hebrew phrase occurs only here in the Psalter; elsewhere it is found usually in prose.

DO I DECLARE. I have thought it best to render the verb in the present, but it seems to be almost equivalent, with the particles preceding, to "I have declared and will declare." It has been proposed to arrange the clauses thus:

Thou hast taught me from my youth  
 and to the present time:

I will declare, etc. . . unto old age and  
 hoariness.

but this is extremely harsh and unrhymical, and, moreover, quite unnecessary.

18. THINE ARM. Comp. Isa. lii. 10; liii. 1; Ezek. iv. 7.

TO (THE NEXT) GENERATION; lit.

- Till I declare thine arm to (the next) generation,  
 To all that shall come thy might,  
 19 And thy righteousness, O God, which is very high,  
 Thou who hast done great things :  
 O God, who is like unto thee !  
 20 (Thou) who hast showed us distresses many and sore,  
 Thou wilt quicken us again,  
 And from the depths of the earth thou wilt lift us up  
 again.  
 21 Do thou increase my greatness,  
 And turn (thyself and) comfort me.  
 22 Also *I* will praise thee with a lute, (even) thy truth, O  
 my God ;  
 I will play to thee upon a harp, O thou Holy One of  
 Israel.

"to a generation," but here used absolutely for the following generation, as in xxii. 30 [31] ; the meaning is evident from the parallelism in the next clause.

19. AND THY RIGHTEOUSNESS. The construction is continued from verse 18. Delitzsch, indeed, in his first edition carried it still further, and made verses 19, 20, 21, all depend on the verb "I declare" in verse 18. "Till I declare . . . thy might and thy righteousness, etc. . . . *that* thou hast done great things, etc. *That* thou hast showed," etc.

20. US. The sudden transition to the plural here seems to have given offence to the Masoretes, who consequently change it in the K'ri to the singular. But these fluctuations between singular and plural are not unusual in the Psalms, and there is no reason why, in the recital of God's dealings, the Psalmist should not speak of them with reference to the nation at large, as well as to himself in particular. ON THOU HAST SHOWED, see lx. 3 [5].

THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH. A figurative expression, like "the gates of death," denoting the extremest peril. Comp. lxix. 2 [3], 14 [15]. The word DEPTHS is the same word as in xxxiii. 7, "He layeth up the depths in storehouses"

(it is the plural of the word which occurs in Gen. i. 2), and means the vast collection of waters in the seas. God is said to bring back his people to life, who had been, as it were, drowned in the depths of the waters.

21. DO THOU INCREASE, or, "mayest thou increase." This rendering seems necessitated by the apocopated form of the verb, unless, indeed, we make the verse (with Delitzsch) depend on the verb in verse 18, "I declare . . . that thou increasedst," etc.

MY GREATNESS. An unusual expression. The word is used of the majesty of God, cxlv. 3, 6 ; of kings, Esth. i. 4 ; and of princes, vi. 3 ; x. 2 ; and its use here, therefore, would seem to imply that the poet was a person of considerable position and influence.

TURN THYSELF. The verb seems here to be employed almost in the same adverbial sense as the twice-repeated "again" (lit. "Thou wilt return") in verse 20. Our translators adopted the other meaning of the verb, viz. "*to compass about*," and so got the rendering, "Thou comfortest me *on every side*"; lit. "Thou compassest, thou comfortest, me."

22. WITH A LUTE ; lit. "with an instrument of a lute, or *nabla*."



23 My lips shall shout for joy, for I will play unto thee,  
And my soul which thou hast redeemed;

24 Also my tongue all the day shall talk of thy righteousness,  
For they are ashamed, for they are put to the blush,  
that seek my hurt.

HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL. This name of God occurs in the Psalms only in two other places, lxxviii. 41; lxxxix. 18 [19], these last two being, according to Delitzsch, older Psalms than this. In

Isaiah this name of God occurs thirty times, in Habakkuk once, in Jeremiah (who may have adopted it from Isaiah) twice, l. 29; li. 5.

<sup>a</sup> צוֹרֵמֵנוּ instead of צ' מֵנוּ, in xxxi. 3, and which the Chald. and many MSS. have here. The LXX perhaps had the same reading, and omitted צוֹרֵמֵנוּ, which follows: γενοῦ μοι εἰς Θεὸν ὑπερασπιστήν, καὶ εἰς τόπον ὀχυρὸν τοῦ σωσά με. The insertion of καὶ does not prove that they read צוֹרֵמֵנוּ (as Davidson); they took צוֹר as a proper name of God, and מֵנוּ as a distinct word. The words צוֹרֵמֵנוּ look, as Hupfeld remarks, as if they were formed out of the fragments of מְצוֹרֵת in xxxi. 3, and צוֹרֵמֵנוּ seems to have been put in to form a support for the following לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי.

<sup>b</sup> גֹּזֵר instead of גָּרִי, in xxii. 10. This has been rendered "Thou who bringest me forth," as if it were the participle transitive of גָּרַע; but the form in *o* is usually intransitive, though this is not always the case. See on xxii. note <sup>c</sup>. (In xc. 10 גָּזַע is probably the preterite, not the participle.) Hence others, as Hengst., would take the form here, as well as in xxii. 10, as infin., "my bringing forth," i.e. the agent in bringing me forth. And so Maur. "*transire meum*, i.e. ejus auctor per metonym." But perhaps it is better, following Schult., *Animadv. Phil.*, to derive the word from a root גָּזַע (cognate with the Arab. جَزَّ, *retribuere*), signifying *to distribute, to requite, to reward*. Hence גֹּזֵר would mean literally, *one who dispenses, τὰμίας*, and so *provides, takes care*, etc. The LXX, σκεπαστής, Vulg. *protector meus*. So Gesen., Ewald, Hupfeld, Zunz. But Delitzsch prefers the meaning *abscindere*, and explains it: *Thou art he that separatest, loosest me* (mein Entbinder) *from*, etc.

<sup>c</sup> מְחַסְרֵנוּ. This is commonly cited as an instance in which a noun with the pronom. suff. is placed in construction with the following noun. But all the instances usually alleged in proof of such construction may be explained on the principle of apposition: here, "my refuge which is strength." See on xlv. note <sup>e</sup>.

## PSALM LXXII.

Two Psalms only in the entire compass of the Psalter, this and the one hundred and twenty-seventh, bear the name of Solomon. Apart from the question whether these particular Psalms are rightly attributed to him or not, the fact is worthy of notice, as it shows us that tradition, which has shed so many glories round the name of Solomon, did not suppose him to have inherited his father's taste for religious poetry and music, or it would not have failed to add this to his many other accomplishments.

Calvin, indeed, and others, have conjectured that the inscription even here does not denote that Solomon was the author. They appeal to verse 20, which tells us that this was the last prayer of David, and they urge that accordingly the title must signify "*For* Solomon," not *of* Solomon." (And so the LXX have εἰς Σαλωμών.) Calvin observes: "After carefully weighing all, I incline to the view that David uttered this prayer as he was dying, and that it was put into the form of a Psalm by his son, that the memory thereof might never perish. . . . But as Solomon took the argument from his father, and only clothed it in the garb of poetry, we may regard David as the principal author."

But verse 20, taken to the letter, would rather imply that all the Psalms in this book were written by David, whereas the inscriptions themselves contradict this, not to mention that the verse itself is manifestly a later addition. And in all other instances where the name of an author is prefixed to a Psalm, it is prefixed with the same preposition which is here employed. The inscription, beyond all doubt, means to say that the Psalm is Solomon's. Nor do I see any reason for rejecting the tradition thus conveyed to us. Hupfeld, indeed, asserts that the Psalm bears evident traces of belonging to a later time than that of Solomon; but he brings forward no proof of his assertion. Delitzsch, on the other hand, contends that we find here the marks both of Solomon's style and of Solomon's time; that the expressions are arranged for the most part in distichs, like the Proverbs, that the character of the poetry is reflective, that it is rich in images borrowed from the world of nature. Besides this, the allusion to Sheba and to Tarshish, and even the extent of dominion which it is hoped would be given to the king, all harmonize with the reign of Solomon better than of any other Jewish monarch. Delitzsch conjectures that he may have composed the Psalm shortly after his accession, and have designed it as a prayer to be offered for himself, as the inheritor of David's

throne and David's promises, in the public services of the Temple. At the same time he admits, as all the soundest expositors have done, that the hopes and aspirations here expressed—so grand and so far-reaching, that they are little less than prophecies—find their fulfilment in one greater than Solomon. "These promises were realized in Solomon, but only typically. They expect, therefore, after Solomon their final realization, and that, in the Son of David whom the prophets of the later kingdom foretell."

Solomon, then, may have uttered such a prayer, may have uttered it for himself, and yet may have felt how far he was, how far any human monarch must be, from approaching to the great ideal which rose, in all its majesty, before his mind. Whether he uttered it, as Delitzsch supposes, at the beginning of his reign, is more doubtful. The allusions to Sheba and Tarshish would seem to imply a somewhat later date. But be this as it may, we have here another instance of the way in which prophecy rooted itself in the Jewish soil, how it looked first to the present and then to the future, first to the type and then to the antitype. Calvin observes most justly, and the observation bears upon the interpretation of all the Messianic Psalms: "They who will have this to be simply a prediction of the kingdom of Christ seem to twist the words very violently. And besides, we should always take care not to give the Jews good reason for reproaching us, as if we were determined by mere force of sophistry to apply to Christ (*sophistice ad Christum trahere*) what does not directly refer to him."

The Targum, however, paraphrases the first verse of the Psalm thus: "O God, give thy judgments to the King Messiah, and thy justice to the Son of King David."

And the Midrash Tehillim says of the king here mentioned: "This is the King Messiah, for it is said, And a stem shall go forth from the root of Jesse." Saadiah, on Daniel vii. 13, takes the same view.

The Psalm is, like the second, the twentieth, twenty-first, and forty-fifth, a royal Psalm.

It has no regular strophical division, but consists of the following parts:

I. The prayer that the reign of the king may be a reign of righteousness, peace, and prosperity, and that it may endure for ever (ver. 1-7).

II. That his dominion may know no bounds, save those of the world itself (ver. 8-11).

III. Then follows the reason why such a dominion should be granted him. He is worthy to receive riches, and honor, and glory,

and might, for he is the righteous saviour of the poor and the afflicted (ver. 12-15).

IV. Lastly, the prayer is repeated both for prosperity and for an everlasting and a universal dominion (ver. 16, 17).

[(A Psalm) of Solomon.]

- 1 O God, give thy judgments unto the king,  
And thy righteousness to the king's son.
- 2 May he decide the cause of thy people with righteousness,  
And of thine afflicted with judgment.

1. The prayer is that God would give his righteousness to the king, that so he may rule and judge righteously, and his righteous government produce righteousness, and therefore peace, among the people.

The difference between the JUDGMENTS of God in the first clause, and the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in the second, is this: the former refers to the *several decisions* which the king may be called upon to pronounce, and the prayer is that these may be so in accordance with the will of God, that they may be as if uttered by his mouth; the second refers to the inner mind and spirit, the wisdom and discernment, which should be the reflex of the divine mind. This is the very idea of justice, as Hengstenberg observes, when the decisions of the earthly judge are in perfect accordance with those of the heavenly; but this can only be when there rests upon the former "the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord." To one only was this Spirit given without measure. In one only was this ideal realized. Solomon, it is true, prayed (1 Kings iii. 9) that God would give him an understanding, or rather *obedient heart* (לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ), that he might judge his people; and of him we read (1 Kings iii. 28), "And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared before the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment"; and to him the queen

of Sheba said (1 Kings x. 9), "Because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and righteousness." But Solomon did not fulfil the hope of this prayer. The righteous judge became the oppressor of his people, the wise king the weak, foolish, despicable voluptuary: God brake in pieces before the eyes of his people, the frail earthly type, that he might lead them to wait for him who was "higher than the kings of the earth," and who would "not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears, but would judge with righteousness the weak, and decide with uprightness for the afflicted of the earth." The Talmudic saying is very striking, and worth quoting here: "Every judge who judgeth a judgment of truth truly, maketh the divine glory (the Shechinah) to dwell in Israel."—*Sanh.* fol. 7, 1.

THE KING. This and the following, THE KING'S SON, are both without the article, which may be accounted for partly by the license of poetry, and partly by the fact that the noun (*melech*), as a name of office, is sufficiently definite in itself.

THE KING'S SON. The stress laid upon this is in accordance with Oriental usage. That the king was of royal ancestry was mentioned on coins, public monuments, and the like. See Isa. xix. 11.

2. DECIDE THE CAUSE, as in liv. 1 [3]; or "minister justice," as in ix. 8.



- 3 May the mountains bring forth peace to the people,  
And the hills in righteousness !
- 4 May he judge the afflicted of the people,  
Save the sons of the poor,  
And crush the oppressor !
- 5 (So that) they fear thee as long as (the) sun (endureth),  
And before (the) moon to all generations.

The word (*dîn*) is a different word from that in verse 4, rendered "judge" (*shâphat*). The root of the first signifies *to govern, to rule*; the root of the second, *to be erect, upright*. But both verbs are used in the general sense of *governing*; for the first see 1 Sam. ii. 10; Zech. iii. 7; for the second, 1 Sam. viii. 20, and elsewhere, and the name of judges given to the leaders of Israel from Joshua to Samuel; both are also used with reference to the double aspect of justice, as defending the oppressed and innocent, and punishing the evil. The main difference between the two, as might be inferred from their respective derivation, is, that the first is the more formal and technical word. Hence the later *Bêth Dîn*, "house of judgment," i.e. court, consistory, etc. (Gr. *δικαστήριον*), a name given also to the great Sanhedrim. There has been much question as to the manner in which the tenses are employed here, and in the next verses. Are they optative, or future (predicting what shall be hereafter), or conjunctive, as standing in a dependent clause, and marking the consequence of the preceding wish, with a not uncommon omission of the conjunction? To render them as futures, as the E.V. and as Hengstenberg do, is clearly wrong, because at the beginning of verses 8, 16, 17 we have the apocopated forms, which are optatives. We must therefore render all as optatives, or some as optatives, some as conjunctives; Hupfeld and Zunz keep the optative throughout, and Delitzsch to the end of verse 8. Ewald has the conjunctive in verses 2, 3.

3. The mountains and hills are mentioned as being the great characteristic features of a country like Palestine.

Comp. Joel iii. 18: "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk." See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, art. "Palestine," § 26.

BRING FORTH. The verb which is here used figuratively is used literally Ezek. xvii. 8, "to bring forth fruit." It is quite unnecessary therefore to render, as French and Skinner, "shall lift up."

PEACE. This is ever represented in Scripture as the fruit of righteousness, and as the great blessing of the times of the Messiah. The King of Righteousness is also King of Peace. Comp. Isa. ii. 4; ix. 5, 6; xi. 9; lxxv. 25; Micah iv. 3; Zech. ix. 10.

IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. For the third time this is mentioned as that attribute which, beyond all others, stamps the king and his rule over his people. As regards the construction, this word in fact belongs to both clauses of the verse. "May the mountains and the hills bring forth peace in (or through) righteousness." To render, as Delitzsch does, "in abundance," besides giving to *ts'dakâh* an unheard-of meaning, mars the whole point of the passage. He tries to defend this meaning by saying that the word denotes the righteousness of grace, as well as of punishment, and then passes through the idea of *clemency*, *ἐλεημοσύνη* [so the LXX sometimes render it], into that of *bountifulness*, for which he quotes Joel ii. 23 (a passage, the sense of which is doubtful) and Ps. xxiv. 5, where it stands parallel with *blessing*. But that this is not in point, see note on lxxi. 15.

4. SONS OF THE POOR, i.e. merely "poor persons," in accordance with the usual Hebrew idiom.

5. (SO THAT) THEY FEAR THEE. It

6 Let him be as rain coming down upon the mown grass,  
As showers that water<sup>a</sup> (the) earth.

is doubtful whether the address is to *God*, or to *the king*. The change from the third person to the second, and *vice versa*, is so common in Hebrew (see on xxii. 26), that the person addressed, so far as the construction is concerned, may certainly be the king. Nor is the extended duration of his reign implied in the words, "as long as the sun," etc., against this view, even if we suppose the words to be addressed originally to a human monarch. For the Jewish monarch was ruler in a theocratic kingdom, which by its very nature was destined to endure forever. Comp. verses 7, 17, and lxxxix. 4 [5], 28 [29], etc., 36 [37], etc.; and if in those passages the throne and the race of the monarch are the object of hope, whereas here the hopes of the Psalmist centre in his *person*, still this also finds its parallel in xxi. 4 [5], "He asked life of thee; thou gavest (it) him, length of days forever and ever" (see note there). Still I think, considering that the Psalm opens with a prayer addressed to God, it is better to suppose that God is also addressed here; and then the clause will be conjunctive, and mark the consequence of the king's righteous rule.

THE SUN and the MOON are mentioned here, and again verse 7, and in lxxxix. 37 [38], as witnesses to an everlasting order, and as it were figures of eternity, things fixed and unchangeable, compared with the fleeting, dying generations of men, as Jer. xxxi. 35; xxxiii. 20; though, as compared with God, themselves subject to decay and destruction, cii. 26 [27], etc.; Isa. li. 6; comp. Job xiv. 18.

AS LONG AS (THE) SUN; lit. "with the sun." Comp. Dan. iii. 33 [E.V. iv. 3], "with generation and generation."

BEFORE (THE) MOON, or, "in the presence of the moon," i.e. as long as the moon shines, "so long as she turns her face to the earth." In Job viii. 16 the use of the preposition is similar; "He is green *before* the sun," though the phrase means there not "as long as

the sun shines," but rather "in the sunshine," "under the influence of the warmth and light of the sun." Classical parallels have been quoted. Ovid, *Amor.* i. 16, "Cum sole et luna semper Aratus erit." *Theogn.* 252, καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν αἰοιδῇ "Ἔσση ὁμῶς ὄφρ' ἂν γῇ τε καὶ ἥλιος.

6. LET HIM BE, etc.; lit. "let him come down as rain," the verb which belongs strictly to the figure being applied improperly to the subject. The gracious influence of the monarch, and of his righteous sway, is strikingly compared to the bountiful shower which freshens the withered herbage, and changes the brown, bare, parched, dusty surface, as by a touch of magic, into one mass of verdure and bloom. We have the same figure in Deut. xxxii. 2; Job xxix. 22, 23, and Prov. xvi. 15. But the most striking parallel is in the last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, where it is said of one who ruleth righteously and in the fear of God among men, that he is Like the light of the morning when the sun ariseth,

A morning without clouds;—

From the sunshine, from the rain, the green grass (sprouts) from the earth.

THE MOWN GRASS; lit. "that which is shorn," whether *fleece* or *meadow*. In the former sense it occurs Judg. vi. 37, and so the older translators all take it. (Aq., ἐπὶ κουράν; LXX and others, ἐπὶ πόκον; Jerome and Vulg., in vellus), probably with the idea that the reign of the monarch would be accompanied by signal tokens of the divine favor and blessing, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece. In the latter sense, the word is found Amos vii. 1 (where the E.V. has "mowings"); and this is indisputably its meaning here, as the parallelism shows. The *mown* meadow is particularly mentioned, because the roots of the grass would be most exposed to the summer heat, after the crop had been gathered in, and the effect would be most striking in the shooting of the young green blade after the shower. "Striking image," says

- 7 Let (the) righteous flourish in his days,  
And abundance of peace, till there be no more moon.
- 8 And let him have dominion from sea to sea,  
And from (the) river to the ends of the earth.
- 9 Before him let the inhabitants of the wilderness <sup>b</sup> bow,  
And let his enemies lick the dust.
- 10 Let the kings of Tarshish and the isles render gifts,  
Let the kings of Sheba and Saba offer presents.

Dr. Pusey, "of a world, in all appearance, hopelessly dead, but with a hidden capacity for receiving life!" (ver. 7.) — *Daniel*, p. 480, note.

THAT WATER (THE) EARTH; lit. "a watering of the earth," the word being a noun, in apposition with the preceding "showers." (See Critical Note.)

7. FLOURISH; lit. "shoot," "bud forth," etc., the figure which describes the effects of the rain being thus carried on. Comp. xcii. 7 [8], 12 [13]. All these sentences, Calvin observes, depend on the first verse. "Therefore that the righteous may flourish, and the people be prosperous, David prays that the king may be clothed with righteousness and judgment. It was Solomon's office, indeed, to defend the righteous; but it is Christ's work to make men righteous, because he not only gives to each one his right, but by his Spirit fashions anew their minds. And thus he brings back again righteousness, which else would be banished from the world."

TILL THERE BE NO MORE MOON. See a similar expression in Job xiv. 12.

8. In verses 5-7 the prayer and the hope are that this kingdom should endure forever; in verses 8-11 that it should know no limits but those of the earth itself.

FROM SEA TO SEA. "From the Mediterranean, their western boundary, to the encircling sea beyond Asia's utmost verge; and from their eastern boundary, the river, the Euphrates, unto the ends of the earth" (Pusey, *Daniel*, p. 480). But perhaps we have only a poetical expression, not to be construed into the prose

of geography, or to be explained (as by Rashi and others) as indicating the extent of territory laid down in Ex. xxiii. 31; "I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river." There *may* be an allusion to that passage (comp. Gen. xv. 18), but if so, it is expanded and idealized, as the expression "unto the ends of the earth" (as in ii. 8) shows. The RIVER is, doubtless, the Euphrates, and it seems probable, therefore, that the poet had in his eye the actual extent of the kingdom to which Solomon succeeded, who reigned "over all kingdoms from the river Euphrates to the border of Egypt," and that he thus anticipated a dominion co-extensive with the world.

10. TARSHISH, in all probability the same as the Greek *Ταρησοῖς*, a great naval mart, and, according to Arrian, a colony of the Phoenicians, in the south of Spain. It traded with Tyre in silver, iron, tin, and lead (Ezek. xxvii. 12). Tarshish and the isles, "the empires on the shores of the Mediterranean," are here mentioned as representatives of all the great maritime and commercial countries of the world. [It is curious that the LXX render Tarshish by *Θάπρεϊς* in Gen. x. 4, but in Isaiah and Ezekiel, where the word occurs, substitute "Carthage," and "the Carthaginians."] See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

RENDER GIFTS or "tribute." The verb is used in the same way 2 Kings iii. 4, and (with the same noun) xvii. 3; comp. Ezek. xxvii. 15. Kimchi explains it of the repeated bringing of tribute, a



- 11 Yea, let all kings bow themselves down before him,  
Let all nations serve him.
- 12 For he delivereth the poor when he crieth,  
And the afflicted who hath no helper ;
- 13 He spareth the weak and poor,  
And the souls of the poor he saveth ;
- 14 From deceit and from violence he ransometh their soul,  
And precious<sup>c</sup> is their blood in his eyes,
- 15 So that they live, and give him of the gold of Sheba,  
And pray for him always,  
(And) bless him all the day.

regular yearly or periodical payment ; and so Gesen., Ros., and others. But this idea is not contained in the verb (used as an auxiliary in the Kal the construction is different). Hengstenberg explains "return a gift," i.e. as a grateful acknowledgment for the benefits they have received. But Hupfeld rightly observes that the notion of *return*, which the verb expresses, is found in all languages in a similar association. He compares the Latin *reditus*, and the French [and English] *revenue*.

SHEBA, the great South Arabian kingdom, so called after Sheba, one of the sons of Joktan (Gen. x. 28). The mention of this, as well as of Tarshish above, harmonizes very well with the opinion that this Psalm was composed either by or for Solomon. The queen of Sheba, who came to visit Solomon (1 Kings x. 1), was queen of Sheba in Arabia, and not of Seba, the Cushite kingdom of Ethiopia, as Josephus and some of the Rabbinical writers would make out. The kingdom of Sheba embraced the greater part of the Yemen, or Arabia Felix. See Mr. R. S. Poole's article in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, ii. 1231.

SABA, in E.V. "Seba," first mentioned as among the sons of Cush (Gen. x. 7), and joined with Egypt and Cush (E.V. Ethiopia) in Isa. xlii. 3, "a nation of Africa, bordering on or included in Cush, and in Solomon's time independent, and of political importance." According to Josephus, Seba was the ancient name

of the Ethiopian island and city of Meroe (*A. J.* ii. 10, § 2), and this must at least have formed part of any ancient Ethiopian kingdom. (See Mr. Poole as above, ii. 1189.)

PRESENTS. The word, like the preceding "gifts," is a singular noun collective ; it only occurs once again, Ezek. xxvii. 15.

The whole verse is in accordance with what we read of Solomon, 1 Kings v. 1 ; x. 10, 25.

12. FOR HE DELIVERETH. The reason is given why all kings and nations should thus do homage to him who sits on David's throne. He has merited such submission by the exercise of every royal virtue, by the justice and the mercy of his sway, by his deep sympathy with, and compassion for, the poor, by the protection which he extends to them against the ministers of fraud and violence. It is not that he merely covers with the shadow of his throne all neighboring nations, and is acknowledged as their political head, but that the bright example which he sets, the majesty of righteousness enthroned in his person, compels all to bow before him. The verse occurs almost word for word in Job xxix. 12, whence it is perhaps borrowed.

14. PRECIOUS IS THEIR BLOOD. He will not see it spilt on the ground, without avenging it. Comp. cxvi. 15 ; 1 Sam. xxvi. 21 ; 2 Kings i. 13.

15. Besides the divine reward which he has merited, the king shall receive



16 Let there be abundance<sup>d</sup> of corn in the land,  
 (So that) on the top of the mountains the fruit thereof  
 rustles like Lebanon,  
 And let (men) spring forth from (the) city like the herbs  
 of the earth.

also the grateful acknowledgment of those whom he has protected and saved from death. Although the verbs here are in the singular, the subject of them must be, not the king, but "the poor," mentioned before, who, in verses 12, 13, are spoken of in the singular number. The apocopated form of the verb with the conjunction denotes a consequence from what precedes (as in xlix. 9 [10], where the very same words occur). Precious is their blood in his sight, so that by his powerful aid they are saved from death, and being also by his goodness made rich, they offer to him the costliest gifts they can bring. The older versions make "the king" the subject of the first verb ("and he shall live," or, "and let him live"), and take the others impersonally ("and one shall give him," i.e. there shall be given him, etc.). And so Luther, Calvin, and the E.V. And so French and Skinner, in defiance of grammar, render,

He shall live and prosper,

And unto him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.

Delitzsch makes "the poor" the subject of the first verb, and "the king" of the second; "that he (the poor) should be saved alive, and that the king should give him," etc. But this, in itself harsh, is rendered harsher, because in the next clause it is evident that "the poor" is again the subject, who pray for the king and bless him.

GOLD OF SHEBA, the offerer being, it is supposed, a native of Sheba. See on verse 10.

AND PRAY FOR HIM. The rendering of the Prayer-book version, "prayer shall be made ever *unto* him," is quite indefensible. The preposition never occurs in this sense. But the *exclusive* Messianic interpretation seemed to require it. The LXX, *πρὸς αὐτὸν*; Vulg.,

*de ipso*. Augustine, however, who here, as in Ps. lxi., supposes not Christ only, but Christ and the church to be spoken of, explains the prayer as made, not for Christ himself, but for the kingdom of Christ. "When we pray *for him*, we pray for the church, which is his body." This is approved by Phillips, but I confess appears to me a style of exposition which is most arbitrary, and only leads to endless confusion and perplexity. Dr. Pusey, on the other hand, renders, "And he (the king) shall pray for him (the poor) continually." "The words," he says, "anticipate the revelation by St. Paul, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' (Heb. vii. 26; add Rom. viii. 34.) The words cannot be rendered, as in the Prayer-book version, 'prayer shall be made ever *unto* him'; on the other hand, the idiom is used exclusively of the intercession of one nearer to God for one less near." He then gives the instances of Abraham interceding for Abimelech (Gen. xx. 7); Moses for Aaron, after the sin of the calf (Deut. ix. 20); Samuel for the people (1 Sam. vii. 5; xii. 19-23); the prophet for Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii. 6); of Jeremiah, at Zedekiah's request (Jer. xxxvii. 3; comp. also Jer. xlii. 2, 20; vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11; xxix. 7); of Job for his friends (Job xlii. 10), "These are all the cases in which the Concordances, at least, give the idiom. The verb occurs with other prepositions, Job xlii. 8 and 1 Sam. ii. 25."

16. The verbs are again optatives in form, and must be taken as the expression of a wish. The wish, however, here is also a hope. Extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil, and an extraordinary increase of population, are anticipated, as in Isa. iv. 1; xxvii. 6; Zech. ii. 4; x. 10.

ON THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS;

## 17 Let his name be forever !

Before the sun let his name be continued,°

And (let men) bless themselves in him ;

Let all nations call him happy !

not mentioned (as something extraordinary) because the mountains were usually the least fruitful parts of the land, but because they were the most prominent (see verse 3). The idea is that the whole country should be one bright sunny picture of gladness and fertility, the corn-fields being seen not only in the valleys, but rising, terrace above terrace, along the mountain-sides, till they reach their summits. The rustling of the corn-fields in the wind is compared to the rustling of the cedars of Lebanon, so thick shall the corn stand, so rich shall be the harvest. I have departed here from the accents, though at the risk of differing from all other editors. The common division of the verse is: Let there be abundance of corn in the land on the top of the mountains: Let the fruit thereof rustle, etc. But, thus, the point is lost or, at least, obscured. This would seem to imply that there was to be no corn anywhere but on the mountains, whereas the object is to make the corn-fields *on the mountains* a principal feature; and there especially would they be exposed to the action of the wind, and so be compared to Lebanon. I also take the verb (רִצְצוּ, *rustles*) as subjoined to, not co-ordinate with, the previous verb.

LET (MEN) SPRING FORTH. Comp. xcii. 7 [8]; Job v. 25; Isa. xxvii. 6. FROM THE CITY, as the dwelling-place of men. Comp. Num. xxiv. 19.

17. BE CONTINUED; lit. "be propagated," continued in his offspring (comp. xlv. 16 [17]), i.e. taking the verb as a passive; or if it be active, "ever make fresh shoots." Or, as Dr. Pusey: "*His name shall propagate*, gaining, generation after generation, a fresh accession of offspring." The verb occurs nowhere else, but the noun is found in Gen. xxi. 23; Job xviii. 19 (where Lee's note may be consulted), Isa. xiv. 22, and means always *offspring*.

BLESS THEMSELVES IN HIM. The same reflexive form of the verb occurs in Gen. xxii. 18; xxvi. 4, whereas in xviii. 18 the passive is employed, "and in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." Gesen., indeed, would retain the reflexive sense in the last instance (and it is certain that the Niphal has sometimes a middle force): Phillips, on the other hand, would take all as passives; but, in spite of the grammarians, I do not believe that a Hithpael is ever used as a strict passive; the reflexive sense is always discernible, even where the idiom of our language does not allow us to retain it in a translation. The meaning seems to be, that the king shall be to them the very type and living image of all blessing, so that they can wish for nothing higher or more glorious than that his blessedness should flow forth upon them. There is so much truth in the note with which Delitzsch concludes his commentary on this Psalm, that, though it is rather long, I will quote it: "Solomon," he says, "was in truth a righteous, gracious, God-fearing prince; he established and even extended the kingdom, he ruled over innumerable people, exalted in wisdom and riches above all the kings of the earth; his time was the most happy, the richest in peace and joy which Israel ever knew. The words of the Psalm were all fulfilled in him, even to the mere particular of the universal dominion which is wished for him. But the end of his reign was not like the beginning and the middle of it. The fair, the glorious, the pure image of the Messiah which he had exhibited, waxed pale. In the time of David and Solomon, the hope of believers, which was attached to the kingdom of David, had not yet fully broken with the present. That time, with few exceptions, knew as yet no other Messiah than the anointed of God, who was David or Solomon

18 Blessed be Jehovah, God, the God of Israel,  
Who alone doeth wondrous things !

19 And blessed be his glorious name forever,  
And let all the earth <sup>f</sup> be filled with his glory !

Amen and Amen.

himself. When, however, the kingdom, in the person of these its two most glorious representatives, had proved itself unable to bring to perfection the idea of the Messiah or the Anointed of God ; and when the line of kings who followed thoroughly disappointed the hope which clung to the kingdom of the present ; and when, though here and there, as under Hezekiah, that hope blazed up for a moment, it was finally extinguished, and men were driven from the present to look to the future,—then, and not till then, did there come a decisive break between the Messianic hope and the existing state of things ; the image of the Messiah was now painted on the pure sky of the future (though of the immediate future), in colors furnished by the unfulfilment of the older prophecy, and the contradiction between the existing kingdom and its idea ; it became more and more, so to speak, something super-earthly, superhuman, extending into the future, the invisible refuge and the invisible aim of a faith despairing of the present, and thereby rendered more spiritual and more heavenly (comp. the Messianic image as described in colors borrowed from our Psalm, Isa. xi. ; Micah v. 3, 6 [E.V. 4, 7] ; Zech. ix. 9, 10). Rightly to understand this, we must free ourselves from the prejudice that the centre of the Old Testament gospel (Heils-Verkündigung) lay in the prophecy of the Messiah. Where is the Messiah set forth as the Redeemer of the world ? The Redeemer of the world is Jehovah. The coming (*Parusia*) of Jehovah is the centre of the Old Testament gospel. How this unfolded itself may be made clear by means of a comparison. The Old Testament, in relation to the day of the New Testament, is night. In

this night there rise in opposite directions two stars of promise. The one describes its path from above downwards ; it is the promise of Jehovah, who is about to come. The other describes its path from below upwards ; it is the hope which rests on the seed of David, the prophecy of the Son of David, uttered at first in tones wholly human, and only earthly. These two stars meet at last, they mingle so as to form but one, the night vanishes, and it is day. This one star is Jesus Christ, Jehovah and David's son in one person, the King of Israel and at the same time the Redeemer of the world ; in a word, the God-man ; blessed be he !” The only part of the above note from which I dissent is the too favorable picture given of Solomon and his reign. This seems to me as much too favorable as that drawn by Mr. Plumptre, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible* [SOLOMON], seems too dark.

18, 19. These verses are a later doxology, appended here to mark the close of the second book of the Psalter. Similar doxologies occur at the end of all the other books (see at the end of Ps. xli.). This approaches the nearest, as Delitzsch has observed, to the regular liturgical *Berachah*, or blessing ; for it contains what is required in that *the name of Jehovah, the Amen*, and the mention of *the kingdom*, though this last is only implied in “the name of his glory,” and it is not expressly said “the name of the glory of his kingdom,” as it is, for instance, in the *Berachah*, at the pronouncing of which, on the day of atonement, the people fell on their faces, so often as the name of Jehovah passed over the lips of the high-priest.

18. JEHOVAH, GOD, see on lix. 5 [6].



## 20 Ended are the prayers of David the son of Jesse.

WHO ALONE DOETH WONDROUS THINGS. Comp. cxxxvi. 4, and Job ix. 8, 10.

19. HIS GLORIOUS NAME, or "the name of his glory." Comp. Neh. ix. 5; and with the concluding words of the verse, Num. xiv. 21.

The repeated AMEN, with the conjunction, is in the Old Testament peculiar to these doxologies in the Psalter. The characteristic difference between the two books of the Psalter, and the use of the divine names, is preserved even in their concluding doxologies. In the first, God is spoken of as "*Jehovah*, the God of Israel"; here as "*Jehovah Elohim*, the God of Israel."

20. This verse, again (with which may be compared Job xxxi. 40), does not belong originally either to the Psalm or to the doxology, though perhaps older than the last. Augustine, indeed, took it as the inscription of the next Psalm, remarking: "Tot habemus Psalmos, in quorum titulis scriptum est nomen David; nusquam est additum

*filii Jesse nisi in hoc loco.*" It is remarkable that the elder Kimchi treated the words as an integral portion of the Psalter. He says: "When all shall have been fulfilled, so that Israel, brought back from exile, shall have been restored to their land, and the Messiah, the Son of David, rules over them, then will they need no more atonement and deliverance and blessing, for they will possess all, and then will be ended the prayers of David the son of Jesse" (quoted by Delitzsch). As several Psalms bearing the name of David occur in the later books of the Psalter, it is evident that this notice, "ended are the prayers of David," etc., must have been placed originally at the end of a smaller collection of Psalms, which was supposed to comprise those only which were known as his, or which at least belonged to his time. It does not prove that all the Psalms of the first two books were regarded as David's, or that he wrote none of those which in the later books go by his name.

<sup>a</sup> זָרִיקָה. The word occurs only here, and is in form a quadrilit. noun, formed from the Aram. זָרַק. A deriv. in Syr. has the meaning of *heavy rain*, and a similar root occurs in Arab. In the Talmud, *Jom.* 87, 1, the word occurs in the sense of *droppings*, זְרוֹיפֵי דְמִיָּה, "droppings of water." The noun stands in apposition with the preceding רְבִיבִים. So Ewald: "Wie Regenschauer, Sättigung der Erde." So too the older versions seem to have understood it. But Hupfeld finds this apposition "intolerably harsh," and thinks the sense requires a verb, and would therefore correct זָרִיקָה or זָרִיקָה.

<sup>b</sup> צָרִים. According to Hupfeld the word everywhere else is used, not of men, but of wild beasts inhabiting the wilderness, even in lxxiv. 14; Isa. xxiii. 13. He denies, therefore, that the nomad inhabitants of the steppes can be meant by the word, and with Olsh. would correct צָרִים, *adversaries*, which he considers the parall. also requires. But there is no reason why צָרִים should not be a comprehensive term, denoting all inhabitants of the wilderness, whether man or beast. The



Greek versions and Jerome all render the word "Ethiopians." The Syr. has "the islands," and if any change were necessary, I should incline to this, אַיִים, as in ver. 10.

יִיָּקֵר. The radical *Yod* is retained, as in אֵילָקָה, Micah i. 8, and the verb is followed precisely as in xlix. 10, by יִיָּהִי as a conjunctive, marking the purpose or object of יִיָּקֵר. Hupfeld, however, is inclined to take the optative form here as hypothetical, or as a condition of what follows: "and when he lives, then he gives," etc.

פָּשָׁה, only here; probably meaning "abundance" (so the Syr. and Rashi), lit. "spreading abroad," referred by the Jewish lexicographers to פָּשַׁח = פָּשָׁה (used of the *spreading* of the leprosy); comp. Aram. פָּסַח, "to spread, so as to cover a wide surface;" and the Arab. فشا, and also فَش, to which last this Dageshed form comes nearest. Kimchi and others, connecting it with פָּח, *a piece, an end*, render *a handful, a little*. And so Calvin, Hengst., Stier, and the E. V., an interpretation which rests on the false notion that the mountains are spoken of as the least fruitful portion of the country.

In the Midrash Coheleth, fol. 73, 3, we read, in reference to this verse: R. Berechia said in the name of R. Isaac, As was the first Göel, so shall be the last. The first Göel made the manna to descend, for it is said, *I will rain bread upon you from heaven* (Ex. xvi. 4). So also the last Göel makes the manna to descend, for it is said, *There shall be an abundance of corn upon the earth*.

יִיָּנֵן. For this, the Hiphil the K'ri substitutes the Niphal יִיָּנֵן, which the E. V. (according to its rule) has followed. On this Dr. Pusey (*Daniel*, p. 481, note 16) remarks: "It is a mere substitution for the bold image of the text. Yet it must be an old correction, since it supplies one of the names of the Messiah," in proof of which he quotes from Schöttgen, *de Messia* ad loc.: "Pirke R. Elieser, c. 3, and Bereshith Rabba, s. 1, f. 3, 3, 'six things' (*seven* are counted in Pesachim, f. 54, 1; Nedarim, f. 39, 2; Midrash Tehillim, f. 35, 4 [see in Mart. *Pug. Fid.* f. 335]; and Midrash Mishle, f. 53, 3) 'were before the foundations of the world, and among them the name of the Messiah, *Before the sun, Yinnon is his name*.' Ibid. c. 36, among those six whose name was known before their birth, the 'name of the Messiah' is mentioned, with an appeal to this place. [See in Mart. f. 334.] Echa Rabbathi, f. 59, 3, and Sanhedrim, f. 98, 2, 'They who are of the school of Jannai said, that "the name of the Messiah is Yinnon" from this place.' Midrash Mishle, c. xix. 21, f. 57, 1, 'The name of the Messiah is Yinnon,' also quoting it." Dr. Pusey adds:

“In the Bereshith R. l. c. and Midr. Till. l. c. it is explained actively [as in the K'thibh], yet the pass. form seems to have crept in, ‘Why is his name called יינין? Because he shall give birth to (יינין) those who sleep in the dust of the earth.’”

אָר-פּל ה'. On אָר with the subject of the passive verb, see Gesen. § 143, 1 *a*.

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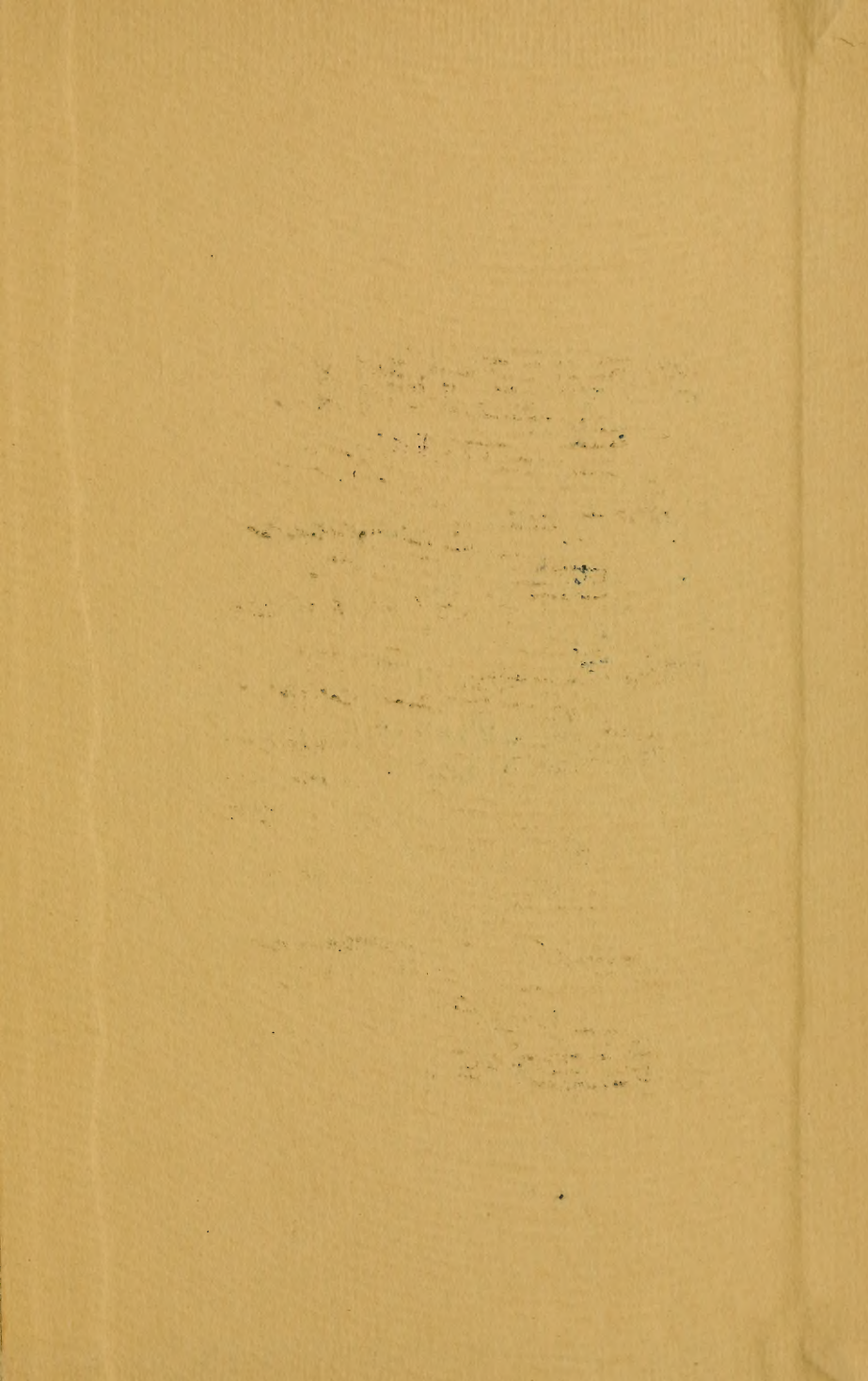






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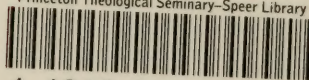
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